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Apr 16 39

A
BRIEF PLEA
FOR
The Old Faith, and the Old Times,
OF
"Merrie England,"
WHEN MEN HAD LEISURE FOR LIFE,
And time to Die:

ADDRESSED, PRINCIPALLY, TO THE INDUSTRIAL CLASSES
OF HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN,
BY THEIR SINCERE WELL-WISHER

FRANK FAIRPLAY.



LONDON:
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET.

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OF

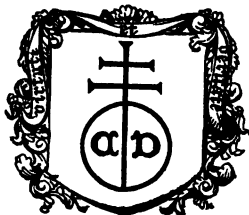
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A BRIEF PREFACE

TO

A BRIEF BOOK.

THE leisured student will neither be surprised by any new facts, nor amused by any fancifully-twisted combination of *old* truths in the following pages. With the LETTER of the sad story of the “reformation” he is necessarily familiar, however insensible or blind he may be to the true nature and the greatness of the lesson which it inculcates. This little volume is not addressed to him, but to those of his fellow-beings who grope in dark mines, labour in stifling factories, toil from infancy to death, engrossed by one o’ermastering, carking care—that of obtaining means to sustain feverish, anxious life—and who, creating and dwelling amidst the “triumphs” and the

“wonders” of the age—the whirring of wheels and the roaring of furnaces—hear, through all the din and turmoil, their beating hearts whispering that to them at least “all—all is vanity and vexation of spirit!”

The writer makes no pretension to divine illumination or to supercilious sanctity: he has made no voyage of discovery into the Holy Book in search of a new religion or an hitherto concealed morality. He is content with the interpretation of the oracles of God which sufficed all Christendom during fifteen centuries of heroic toil and marvellous progress. It suffices to observe the flowers flash into beauty, the trees put forth their leaves and fruit, to be certain, without having recourse to a chemical analysis of the mysterious process, that the earth, the air, the sun are artistically adapted to paint the lily and the rose, and to swell the substance of fruits meet for man. The divine gift is proof of the divinity of the giver. It is by this standard that the author of these pages has endeavoured to test the divinity of the faith taught by the Apostles; and of that which first shone in full radiance upon England from Mistress Boleyn’s charming eyes.

His feeble voice may, perchance, awaken powerful echoes amongst earnest-minded, if deeply-prejudiced Englishmen. The touch of the feeblest child suffices to arouse the slumbering giant. Once thoroughly awakened to a consciousness of the hopeless nature of the struggle and pursuit in which they waste the few short and hurried moments of spare life—fighting with and chasing fantastic shadows which ever and anon start out of the deep gloom of doubt and unbelief by which they are encompassed—they will soon perceive that it is only by lightening themselves of the earth-chaining load of pride, and reasoning conceit, that they can hope to soar above the misty chaos, into the clear light of faith and hope.

The tones of earnestness and truth are ever powerful to soften and subdue. The benevolent Mrs. Fry used calmly to seat herself amidst raving lunatics, and commence reading, with a low, quiet, earnest voice, a chapter from the Scriptures. This never failed of a sedative effect upon the most violent. "Hush!" once exclaimed a maniac, with flashing eyes, when a slight interruption occurred; "hush! the angels have lent her their voices."

The votaries of the primitive church, however feeble their utterance may gather courage from this example, not to shrink from the duty of protesting boldly but meekly against the madness of the present time, in the very presence of the madmen. If they but bring to the task a spirit of earnestness and charity, the angels will lend them their voices.

Reader of this book, whoever thou art, pray for the sinner that wrote it.

CHAPTER I.

"DOCTOR," said one day Catharine de Boro, to her variously-inspired husband, Luther, "how is it that whilst subject to Papacy we prayed so often, and with such fervour, while now we pray with the utmost coldness, and very seldom."¹ The characteristic answer of the apostle of the reformation;—"the reason is, that the devil continually urges his servants to fulfil his worship," seems to have silenced, if it did not satisfy the fair querist, but what reply could, in this *enlightened* nineteenth century be made, by the acutest, the most inventive of no-popery brawlers, to the Englishman that, shaken by the same doubts of the divine origin of the reformation, as appear to have troubled the mind of Luther's spouse, should address him thus: "How is it, Sir, that whilst during the stormy centuries that England was united to this terrible Papacy; when, in comparison with her present immense means and boundless wealth, she was poor and feeble, her people, spite of frequent foreign invasion and domestic war, advanced steadily in real greatness, true freedom, and happiness, acquiring, for a country almost lost amidst the storms and fogs of the northern ocean, the distinctive title of 'merrie' England; whereas *now*, after enjoying for more than three centuries the great blessings conferred by the reformation—her soil, during that long period unprofaned by hostile foot—dark and thickening clouds of pauperism obscure and mock the splendour with which they so hideously contrast;

¹ Memoirs of Luther written by himself, translated by M. Michelet. Paris, Hachette. London, Dulau.

and the cries and lamentations of despairing millions increasing hourly in vehemence, extort from a nobleman famous for puritan piety, the damning admission that the industrious, inventive, courageous, patient people, who have raised up and still sustain the magnificent edifice of British greatness, are barely vouchsafed sufficient of coarse crumbs, from the rich table they have spread, to sustain weary life,—‘have neither time to live nor time to die.’¹ Is this, Sir, the goodly heritage promised us by the founders of the reformation?” The answer, judging from what we are compelled to daily see and hear, would probably be a mystifying, meaningless jargon about “dark ages,” and “modern illumination,” set off with eulogies of the triumph of steam, and the rapid advance of intellect and railroads. An orthodox *Orangeman* would add, by way of additional garnish, a racy compound of “immortal memories,” “brass money,” and “wooden shoes.”

Whatever reply might be made or attempted to such questionings, it would still remain a great fact, that the creators of the boundless wealth of England are the least cared for people on the face of God’s earth ; and yet they, the uncared for poor, have not failed in duty to the careless rich ! Age and youth, vigorous man and feeble woman, have toiled unceasingly to heap up the bursting stores of capital : even infancy has placed its tiny shoulder to the wheel, the joyous idleness of childhood has been blotted out of the toiler’s life ; and his reward at the close of his weary pilgrimage along life’s hot and dusty road, is a grudging seat in one of the union poor houses ; —those modern substitutes for the old popish houses of hospitality, which once covered and blessed the merry land !

Sad truths ! so sad and startling as, but a few years ago, to surprise a Clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Mr. Malthus, into a confession of downright Atheism. Confounded and alarmed by the condition of the industrial classes of Great Britain, the reverend gentleman wrote a book, and a clever

¹ Lord Ashley’s speech on the Factory Bill, in the House of Commons.

one it is, to demonstrate that Providence, utterly ignorant or strangely regardless of the simplest lesson of political economy, which enjoins the adaptation of the supply to the demand, was creating far too many souls to be saved and bodies to be fed, and prophesying that if the wisdom of parliament did not hasten to remedy God's blunders, by the enactment of "preventive checks," society must be speedily dissolved. He wished that new comers on the earth should be made thoroughly to understand and feel, that their presence at great nature's feast, is an impertinent and punishable intrusion; and that it would be, consequently, wise and decorous in them to retire from the scene as quickly as possible. This book made many converts; and has been, there is little doubt, a potent means of bringing about the modern reformation of the old poor-law; the object of which reformation is confessedly "to keep down the numbers of the population;" a phrase, glibly as it slips from the tongues of philosophic politicians, involving a blasphemy, than which one more atrocious, was never conceived by man or demon.

The theory of this distinguished divine was developed by more practical men a short time after its promulgation. Taking for granted the truth of Mr. Malthus' premises and the accuracy of his deductions, they consistently and rationally argued that the true remedy for the blunders of Omnipotence, was to be found, not in vain efforts to subdue the passions of mankind, but in the early and systematic destruction of the fruits of those passions. They recommended the "painless extinction of infants" as an infallible preventive of the social horrors apprehended by their reverend Mentor. They too found readers and converts. Those who are conversant with the "statistical returns" of crime in large cities, could tell us if they would, how numerous are the testimonials to the efficacy of these satanic lessons, inscribed on the bloody page!

These infernal *remedies*, these diabolical suggestions are addressed, be it remembered, to the industrious classes of the richest country under the sun; a country reformed from popish

error and slavery three hundred years ago! We read in the holy book that Satan offered Christ all the kingdoms of the earth, as a temptation to his worship. Has England irrecoverably exchanged the eternal Jewel of her peace, for the glittering vanities of extended rule and wide dominion?

The saying is true as trite, that history is philosophy teaching by examples. It were surely wise then for Englishmen to thread back the mazes of the chequered history of their country, in order to ascertain if there did really once exist a time when the social machine required no such diabolical nostrums to keep it in healthy action: when the mutual rights and duties of capital and labour were acknowledged and enforced;—when, in short, the working bees of the social hive—had “leisure for life and time to die.” That there *was* such a period, it is the purpose of these pages to demonstrate; and, however the piety and practice of the times to which I wish to direct the attention of my countrymen, may have been tinged with trivial superstitions; or as some would have us believe, dimmed by grave errors, sure I am that that piety and practice evolved and constituted the best and soundest system of political economy that ever influenced the destinies, and formed the character of a people. I further believe that but for the calamity of the reformation, with its plunderings, its penal statutes, its faith *without* works, and other crimes and follies,—England would be at this day not only as great and powerful as she justly boasts herself, but as happy as she is great, as contented as she is powerful. We are frequently told, with a smirk and a swagger, by Exeter-hall orators that the “reformation” has made England what she is. If they mean what she is in her crowded mines, her hot factories, her teeming garrets, alleys, cellars, union-houses, in her reckless and restless working population, I perfectly agree with them; but it is surely somewhat illogical and absurd to attribute her victories by land and sea to the reformed liturgy; the invention and perfection of Steam-boats, Rail-roads, and Gas-lights, to the thirty-nine articles; or the erection of the Thames Tunnel to the doctrine of the Queen’s spiritual supremacy!

A knowledge of the general history of the Church previous to the reformation will enable the reader the better to appreciate the claims of the agents of that tremendous event, upon his respect and gratitude. I propose, therefore, to trace, as briefly and as faithfully as possible, an outline of the rise, growth, and progress of the Old Faith, which, cradled and nursed amid the persecutions and calamities of heathen Rome, grew daily in strength and majesty; till triumphant over all, the unarmed Conqueror seated himself in undisputed dominion on the ruins of a pagan world.

It must be borne in mind that the arms of the Church are wielded by human hands, and that its bright history must, consequently, be expected to be in some places blotted and blurred by the evil deeds of bold, bad men, who dishonoured the faith and office they professed and exercised. Amidst the loud hosannas which celebrate her glorious and peaceful triumphs over the sensual Atheism of the South, and the coarse Idolatry of the North of Europe, an attentive ear may doubtless distinguish, at long intervals apart, a wailing cry of suffering as for conscience sake; but this, however sad and mournful, no more affects her claim to be God's Church, than did the crime of Judas invalidate the commission given by Christ to his companions, the Apostles. These are specks on an else stainless robe; and it is certain that no candid and attentive student of the history of the Church, whatever his previous religious prejudices, can rise from its perusal without being impressed with a profound conviction, that she was God-directed, and God-sustained in her high mission; a mission whose purpose and success is thus summed up in a celebrated *protestant* publication.

"The Papal Dynasty was the triumphant antagonist of another despotism the most galling, the most debasing and *otherwise the most irremediable*, under which Europe has ever groaned. The centralization of ecclesiastical power more than balanced the isolating spirit of the feudal oligarchies. The Vassal of Western and the Serf of Eastern Europe, might otherwise at this day, have been in the same social state, and

military autocracies might now be occupying the place of our constitutional and paternal governments. Hildebrand's despotism, with whatever inconsistency, sought to guide mankind by moral impulses to a more than human sanctity. The feudal despotism with which he waged war, sought with a stern consistency, to degrade them into beasts of burden, or beasts of prey. It was the conflict of mental with physical power, of literature with ignorance, of religion with injustice and debauchery. To the Popes of the middle ages was assigned a province, their abandonment of which would have plunged the church and the world into the same hopeless slavery."¹—*Edinburgh Review*, for April, 1845, page 327.

This is the testimony of the great Whig Review to the services rendered by the Papacy to mankind. To the Popes, it admits, the nations of Europe owe their "constitutional and paternal governments." The tiara saved us from being degraded into "beasts of prey or beasts of burden." And this power, Englishmen, to which in common with the other nations of Europe, you owe all that makes life valuable, you are constantly told by the fierce spirits of Exeter-hall is no other than Anti-Christ!!

To confirm the truth of these partial revelations of the *Edinburgh* reviewers; and at the same time to demonstrate how much greater claims to the gratitude of mankind are possessed by the ancient Church, it is only necessary to review her plainly marked history. None but the wilfully blind can fail to read its characters aright. They are too vivid, giant-like, and self-revealing, to be overlooked or misapprehended.

1 To this testimony from the Whig camp, to the character and labours of the Popes of the *middle* ages, it may be as well to subjoin that of another writer of the same class, relative to the Popes of the *earlier* times. Ranke, in his *Lives of the Popes of Rome*—and no one will accuse Ranke of a leaning towards the papacy,—says: Chapter 2nd, p. 15th, "Whatever judgment may be passed on the Popes of the earlier times, certain it is they had always grand interests in view—the care of an oppressed religion, the struggle with paganism, the propagation of christianity among the northern nations, the establishment of an independent hierarchical power. Grand designs and achievements nurture the dignity of man's nature, and these efforts upheld the greatness of the Popes at a loftier pitch."

The advent of Christianity was fitly heralded by the silent passing away of the old heathen creed. The reflections of their own passions and follies, with which mankind had stained the heavens, had faded, or at least were rapidly fading into oblivion. Earnest faith in them had died; and hope had disappeared with faith. A deep shadow, unbroken by a ray of belief in a future life, extended from the cradle to the grave. The wise men of the Earth had not by seeking found out God. The once faintly asserted doctrine of the immortality of the soul—the great *perhaps* of Socrates and of Plato, was held in general contempt. The “instructed” classes no longer affected respect for a speculation so absurd and unphilosophical. “We are sufficiently acquainted,” says the infidel historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, “with the eminent persons, who flourished in the age of Cicero, and the first Cesars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life, was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future state. At the bar, in the senate of Rome, the ablest orators were not apprehensive of giving offence to their hearers by exposing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, which was rejected with contempt by every man of a liberal education and understanding.”¹ Upon this night of unutterable gloom and horror, when according to Pliny “men loved or rather pretended to love only the living, and did not even pretend to love any but those who were prosperous: for both the wretched and the dead were alike forgotten,” it was decreed in the Eternal Councils that the Sun of Righteousness should rise. How rapidly did the dark and sinful earth lighten into

¹ Some modern critics have stoutly contended that the religion of Greece and Rome,—a belief in a future and immortal life, had not fallen into general contempt, because the Voltaire of his day, Lucian of Samosata, has recorded numerous instances falling under his own observation, of the eagerness with which paper-headed serpents and other audaciously-absurd “oracles,” were consulted by the highest classes. In other words, the Romans were a religious people, because they had recourse to *fortune-tellers*. One might as well pronounce Buonaparte a religious man, for he too believed in a kind of mystical *fate*; and attached significance and credence to signs, omens, and fortune-tellers.

spiritual beauty beneath HIS mighty influence.¹ The world that had seemed the caprice of a demon, viewed in the light of faith, was transformed into a glorious trial-field of God, wherein all faithful and earnest combatants might win immortal life and bliss ineffable! Star after star shone swiftly forth in the spiritual firmament; reflections of the glory that had but recently disappeared beneath the visible horizon on Calvary; the mind of man was stirred to its inmost depths, with an awakening consciousness of a higher nature, of a nobler destiny than sage or poet had ever taught or dreamed. Vainly did heathen Emperor and pagan Priest strive by artifice, by fraud, by violence, to arrest the movement which was sweeping to destruction the once cherished idols of a fantastic worship. The religion of Christ was attacked in its cradle with every species of weapon, which the wit, the wisdom, the craft of man could devise for its destruction. The self-sufficing philosopher stumbling along the path of life, without other guidance than his own blinding vanity, pronounced it "foolishness." The satirist aimed his keenest shafts at the "new superstition," and the historian paused in his record of loftier events;—the downfall of a Pompey, the construction of an aqueduct, the elevation or disgrace of a courtesan, to bestow a few slight words of contempt upon this novel aberration of the human intellect; and when all these had failed, the Emperors had recourse to the sword and stake of the civil magistrate: persecution followed persecution, the entire power of the masters of the world was ruthlessly exerted to put down christianity. Vain efforts! Within fourscore years of the resurrection of Christ, Pliny "lamented the magnitude of the evil which he vainly attempted to eradicate;" and the first century had not elapsed, when Justin Martyr exclaimed: "There exists not a people whether Greek or Barbarian, or any other race of men, by whatsoever appellation distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell in tents or wander about in covered waggon,

¹ Eusebius says,—Hist. Eccl. 2, 3.—"It gleamed over the earth like a sunbeam."

among whom prayers are not offered up in the name of a crucified Jesus, to the Father and Creator of all things." With what weapons was this wondrous triumph achieved—what causes led, spite of the deadliest opposition, to such astounding results? Mr. Gibbon, one of the most inveterate of the foes of Christianity, attributes the rapid spread of the Christian Faith to five principal causes, namely:—"The inflexible zeal of the Christians: The doctrine of a future life: The miraculous powers *ascribed* to the primitive Church: The pure and austere morals of the Christians: The union and discipline of the Christian Republic." Be it so; allow to these agencies the influence Mr. Gibbon ascribes to them;—still the question remains substantially unanswered. What was there in the mere precepts of Christianity, to kindle that inflexible zeal in worldly pagan hearts? The faith they embraced offered no lures to ambition, pride, or avarice. It promised no exclusive privileges; pointed to no conquests over monarchs; had no crowns of military glory to bestow. Its duties were meekness, charity, love to all, its badge, contempt, its privilege to suffer. How then could that inflexible zeal be kindled; those pure and austere morals, and that union and discipline be prescribed and enforced, except by a *divinely-kindled* faith, an undoubting confidence in the truth of the revealed doctrines, confirmed and inflamed by the evidence of the miracles *ascribed* to the growing church?

The "inflexible zeal," the heroic constancy of the Christians suffered no diminution or change, during three centuries of fiery trial. Their deliverance came at last. On the 24th of February, A. D. 303, the last terrible edict of Diocletian was published at Nicomedia, and enforced as usual with bloodshed and violence.¹

¹ As soon as the sanguinary decree was published in Nicomedia, it was torn down and trampled upon by a Christian youth, of patrician birth. He was seized, and as an atonement to the insulted majesty of the emperors, was roasted to death at a slow fire; but the executioners were unable to subdue his constancy or to change the "steady and insulting smile" with which he regarded them till he expired. Mr. Gibbon who relates this anecdote, adds:—"His offence was treason, and by the mildest laws deserved death." For a thoroughgoing apologist of merciless tyranny—provided the tyrant be not a churchman—commend us to a *philosophic* and *liberal* infidel. Bear witness, the *histories* of Hume and Gibbon.

Twenty-one years afterwards the triumph of the Emperor Constantine over his competitor for the imperial diadem, freed the church from her temporal foes, and opened up for her a new career of usefulness, of glory, and of *danger*. On the site of the first persecution, the gardens of Nero, where the writhing bodies of the Christians, nailed on crosses and besmeared with pitch, were used as torches to illuminate the night, now stands the magnificent Temple of St. Peter;—proud monument of the triumph, the power, and the glory, of the once trampled and persecuted church!

A deeply important question here suggests itself; at which I can however but briefly glance. What was the faith held by the church which now issued from the catacombs to worship in the face of day. What were the dogmas bequeathed to that army of confessors by the palm-wreathed martyrs, that in their very presence, had so recently sealed their convictions with their blood? Is the boast of the church of Rome, that she alone has kept that faith, maintained those dogmas, a fiction or a verity? Let us inquire of the primitive Christians themselves, who, though dead, still breathe in their mighty and imperishable works: let us ask of the great council, consisting of upwards of three hundred bishops of that very church, held but a few months after Constantine's edict of toleration, at Nice in Bythnia, to show us the primitive faith and doctrines?¹

“Had this primitive church, issuing from the catacombs, a Hierarchy, a settled order of Priesthood, or had they renounced all spiritual guide, save that of each individual's infallible, many-coloured judgment and inspiration?”

This great council was composed of three hundred and eighteen bishops; and attended by more than two thousand clergymen of inferior dignity.

¹ The Atheist Gibbon and the Socinian Priestly, both seek to weaken the authority of the great Nicene Council, by insinuations that the decrees propounded by the bishops, were rendered at the dictation of the Emperor Constantine. Hatred of Christianity must have sadly blunted the perceptions of writers, who could seriously impute such subserviency to men whose mutilated frames afforded indisputable evidence of their contempt of the utmost violence of imperial wrath.

"Did this church, issuing from the catacombs, acknowledge the supremacy of the See of Rome?"

The council of Nice was presided by the Legates of the Pope of Rome.

"What was the doctrine of this church, as yet, at least, untainted, and indeed scarcely breathed upon by the world, with respect to the ineffable mystery of the Trinity?"

By an almost unanimous vote, the council condemned the Arian heresy, and framed a decree, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is insisted on in the most explicit and direct terms.

"What was the faith of these children of the first martyrs, of these primitive confessors, whose high privilege it was to tread the path made shining and distinct by the footsteps of recently departed saints, upon the inscrutable mystery of the Sacrament of the Lord's supper?"

"Did they bear no record of their belief regarding this all-important dogma? Was the annunciation of the true faith reserved for Berengarius, who towards the close of the eleventh century startled Christendom by the announcement that instead of a "real presence" there was a "real absence" in the holy Sacrament?"

The question almost answers itself. With respect to the dogma of the real presence, there does not appear to have been the slightest difference of opinion among the martyrs and confessors of the primitive church. Justin Martyr's "apology;" the testimony borne, directly and incidentally, by Ignatius, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and indeed, by every primitive Father who touched upon the subject, leave no room for cavil upon the matter; especially when we know that every society of Christians that departed from the ancient church, from the fourth century till the eleventh;—the Nestorians, the Armenians, the Jacobites, the Copts, the Ethiopians, the Greeks, recognised and recognise to this day, the real presence in the Eucharist. The "real absence" was as purely the invention of Berengarius, as the soul-destroying, earth-desolating doctrine of justification

by Faith *alone*, was that of more modern but scarcely more audacious reformers.¹

There can be no doubt then, that in all essentials the church of Rome teaches now as she taught amidst the tombs. Archdeacon Middleton, who had vainly sought for traces of protestantism in the patristic writings, soured with disappointment, angrily confessed that "primitive Christianity was nothing more nor less than modern popery." There is no doubt of it. All that has been added to the discipline, the ceremonial of the Church is the natural, and indeed, inevitable development of the practices, exercises, and tendencies of the apostolic church. In some instances clearer and better defined *illustrations* of the faith which lighted up the dungeons of Nero, and shed its radiance over the dim solitudes and gloomy caverns, where with perils and with darkness compassed round, the earlier confessors met to worship God in spirit and in truth, have been adopted, but the *Faith* has ever remained the same, unchanged and undefiled.

We must here leave this suggestive theme, in order to contemplate the progress of the church in her *temporal* mission; her success in which, in the emphatic words I have before quoted, preserved us "from being degraded into beasts of prey and beasts of burden." We must strive to appreciate the tremendous difficulties, the infinite discouragements, encountered and overcome ere the great task was achieved. It is surely impossible to avoid believing that that which does the work of mercy, must be mercy-sent. I have often thought that there would be less difficulty in believing that Deism, and other less specious *negations* of belief, were emanations of the Creator, if they were adapted to the exigencies of creation. Deistical Sisters of Mercy; an unbelieving Vincent de Paul brotherhood, might suggest strange doubts. Happily for the feeble faith of these latter days, it is not likely to be subjected to such trials.

¹ Those who wish to see this subject thoroughly discussed, should consult Dr. Wiseman's lectures, published by C. Dolman, Bond Street. To a *Christian* the argument is conclusive.

If the *establishment* of Christianity, by Constantine, afforded increased facilities for the diffusion of the gospel, which is somewhat doubtful, there is no question that it imposed upon the heads of the church, new and onerous duties, the abandonment of which, we are now told by high authority, would have plunged the church and the world into the same hopeless slavery. It is the glory of the sovereign pontiffs that they at once raised themselves to the height of their lofty mission, and stood firm and erect amid the wreck of a crumbling empire. When Christianity was established, Heathen Rome was fast hastening to decay. The virtues, the courage, the abilities, the craft of successive emperors, served only to prolong the agony of her decline and fall. The footsteps of the ministers of peace were encumbered by the gigantic ruins caused by barbarian violence. The rising church, had it been destructible, must have been speedily overwhelmed by the innumerable hordes of northern idolators, that swept the empire like a destroying flood. For more than two hundred years, reckoning from about the close of the fourth to the commencement of the seventh century, Europe alternately ravaged by Goth, Hun, Frank, Norman, exhibited one vast scene of desolation and horror. The Pontificate stood erect indeed, but it was on all sides environed by ruin and desolation. All other power had been annihilated by the sword of the conquerors. Every vestige of the Roman jurisprudence had disappeared. Temples in honour of the sanguinary deities of Scandinavia, polluted the soil whence the comparatively harmless gods of Heathen Rome had been recently driven. The lights of science and of literature, kindled and fed by the heroic toil of centuries, were trampled out beneath the bloody hoofs of Atilla, Alaric, and their successors. One star alone gleamed forth upon the dark and howling waste,—that only guiding light, sole sign of hope, was PAPAL Rome.

After two centuries of strife and carnage had passed away, a precarious peace, a troubled calm ensued. The victorious Barbarians, wiped their reeking swords, and settled down, the Goths in Spain, the Huns in Pannonia, the Franks in Gaul, the

Lombards and Goths in Italy, the Saxons in England, to enjoy the fruits of conquest. New forms of government, dictated by the instincts, habits, traditions and necessities of the victors, were established. It was at this period, that what is called the "Feudal System" was organised. This institution it is necessary briefly to describe. Each nation was essentially a military confederacy, the Chiefs or Lords of which, were bound, in proportion to the extent of their possessions, to contribute towards the defence of the state in case of war; but each powerful Chief or Baron claimed and exercised *real* sovereignty within his own domain. What seemed the head of the military oligarchy,—

"The likeness of a kingly crown had on,"

but the substantial power of the sovereign depended not so much upon his kingly office, as upon the extent of his individual possessions, and upon his power to purchase the services or conciliate the good will of the principal Chiefs.¹ This system was the natural result of the constitution of the conquering armies. Each Chief fought, like the Gow Chrom, for "his own hand," and after victory, claimed such a share of the spoil, as

¹ Mr. Allen, the able author of the "Inquiry into the rise and growth of the Royal Prerogative in England," appears to regret that by the efforts of "churchmen and courtiers," the King, from being the scarcely more than nominal "Chief of a warlike and turbulent people," grew insensibly into a commanding power, capable of overawing the numerous petty sovereignties by whose favour he had obtained and was permitted to wear the crown. Surely it must be admitted by all reasonable men, that in the interest of the people, in the interest of freedom, the extension of the royal prerogative was of prime necessity. It has ever been the fashion with a certain party, who prate loudly of liberty, equality, &c. &c., to represent oligarchical triumphs over the Crown, as victories of freedom over despotism. Anything more audaciously stupid can scarcely be imagined, or it follows that the Venetian regime was a model government. It is very easy to tickle the ears of unreflecting persons, with such clap-trap phrases as that of Dunning—"The power of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." The tyranny under which the good people of England groan, is not the tyranny of Queen Victoria. It is that hideous one generated and sustained by an artfully constructed combination of wealthy and noble families; the amusing *see-saws* of which, if they do not lessen the actual weight of the burden, at least distract the attention, and bewilder the understandings of the puzzled owners of the galled shoulders, upon which the merry ups and downs are artistically *worked*. The two rival factions contend for the prizes of the State, at a tournament of which the people are mere spectators, (albeit they defray the cost) and where the chief office of the Monarch is to distribute, not *to award*, the trophies.

his services or present power entitled him to claim, or enabled him to secure. In return for his land he engaged to supply the King or General, to whom he swore fealty, with proportionate military aid in case of war. The great Chiefs distributed a large portion of the land thus acquired to inferior military dependents, on the same conditions ; and thus each conquered country was usurped and over-awed by a vast military confederacy, spread over the soil, and bound together for mutual countenance and aid by the strong ties of community of interest, and of danger. A soldier was a freeman. The unhappy people were serfs, slaves, holding life and limb at the caprice of their ferocious masters. A sovereign, such as Charlemagne, might now and then arise, capable of overawing and controlling his turbulent Barons, but as a general rule, there can be no question that the substantial power of the nominal monarchy resided for centuries in the Barons, who not only freely exercised upon their helpless dependents their *legal* privilege of "Donjon keep," but the more questionable right of "Gallows Tree." These rude princes of the earth, whose only law was their own will, were Idolators. Here then were the kindly elements of which the church of God was to be anew built up ; these the dull clods into which it was her task to breathe the breath of life ; these the men of violence and blood, she must subdue to the religion of peace ; this the stormy sea which her voice was to bid—"BE STILL !"

Happily for humanity, the Church shrunk not from her gigantic task. The zeal of her Augustines, her Wilfrids,¹ and a host of congenial spirits grew with the necessity for its exercise. Those devoted agents of the sovereign Pontiff traversed Europe

1 Afterwards Boniface, the Apostle of Germany. He was born at Crediton, Devonshire, in the year 680. He closed a long and arduous life, illustrated by the most exemplary piety, by a glorious martyrdom at West Freidland, in 755. He had appointed a day on which to confirm a large number of catechumens whom he had previously baptized ; and was surprised with his followers on the morning of the ceremony, by a numerous body of pagans. He met his death with Christian fortitude, commanding his retinue, not to offer a vain resistance to the ruffians, but to submit their souls in peace to their Creator. See Milner's Church History.—Vol. 3.—This English saint and hero was the guide, philosopher and friend of Charles Martel, whose victory, under God, rescued Europe from the dominion of the Saracens.

in all directions, regardless of suffering, danger, or death. They went not forth as do modern missionaries, furnished with millions of bibles to place in the hands of savages, incapable of reading much less of interpreting the oracles of God.¹ Their banner was the cross, their weapons prayers. They proclaimed themselves messengers of the visible Church of Christ, commissioned by the Most High God to denounce HIS vengeance on the worshippers of idols, and to proclaim HIS mercy to those who turned from their evil ways.

Their saintly lives, their matchless zeal, their fervent devotion their scorn of death, bore rich and ample fruit. The Idols of a sanguinary faith were cast out, to be replaced by the images of a crucified Saviour. Christian temples, houses of refuge, and safe retreat from the din and fury of the world, hospitable asylums for the indigent, protected by the "peace of the church," sprung up over the length and breadth of the land; the pulse of the fevered world calmed gradually, and Faith, Hope, Charity returned to bless the earth, they seemed to have abandoned for ever.

¹ I have oftentimes wondered whilst looking on upon the everlasting strife of texts with which dissent assails dissent, by what process of reasoning dissenters have arrived at a *certainly*, that the New Testament from which they argue, is the true and real New Testament. The Church, the Roman Catholic Church collected and collated those Scriptures; and by virtue of her infallible testimony, pronounced them the true Word of God. But once *deny* that infallibility, and how can you be *certain* that you have not been choused out of the right, and palmed off with the wrong gospels and epistles! Merely *human* judgment, however learned or acute, can never afford perfect certainty. A wretched play by one Ireland, was pronounced, a few years ago by very learned men, a genuine work of Shakespeare. And if you admit for the nonce, the infallibility of the Church, how will you contrive to deny that attribute when, sanctioning and testifying to other truths! Here, at the very threshold of the controversy, is a stumbling block, which the lightest-heeled Scripturist can never over-leap.

CHAPTER II.

The immense advance in civilization made by Europe, during the thousand years it was more immediately controlled, directed, and animated by the councils of Christian Rome, can only be fairly estimated by comparing its wretched condition at the commencement of the sixth, with its prosperous state at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the reformation frenzy burst forth. The history of that long and troubled period is a record of progress throughout, and, that too, amidst difficulties that might have justified despair. There are stains on the bright leaves, but they are lost amidst the host of glories which sparkle throughout the radiant volume: a taste for literature revived and zealously cultivated: the arts of sculpture, painting, architecture, perfected by the fostering care and munificent patronage of the Church: settled laws, administered by, in the main, impartial and independent tribunals; jury trial; free parliaments; printing invented, a new world discovered; these were the triumphs of the "dark ages;" the trophies of which Catholic prelates, legislators, juriconsults, artists, discoverers, heroes, and patriots could justly boast; many of them, wrested from masterful usurpation, and red-handed violence.

This progress was essentially the work of the Church. In those days clerical encroachment upon kingly or baronial privilege, was an inroad upon the domain of an irresponsible despotism: claims for clerical immunities were demands of new rights for the people. This is abundantly manifest.

Rome, *usurping*, Rome, as it is called, gradually and cautiously narrowed the dominion of the temporal lord. Not only did the clergy contrive to exempt themselves from the jurisdiction of what was in those times, by a strange misnomer, called the *civil law*,—but which meant nothing, in fact, but the *will* of the king or baron,—“but,” says Dr. Robertson, the historian of Charles the 5th, “they contrived under different pretexts, and by a multiplicity of artifices to communicate this privilege to so many persons, and extended their jurisdiction to such a variety of cases, that the greater part of those affairs which gave rise to contest and litigation was drawn under the cognisance of the spiritual courts.”

What was the nature and effect of this privilege which the clergy, after securing for themselves, were so anxious by “a multiplicity of artifices” to extend to others? Dr. Robertson, bigotted and anti-catholic though he be, shall explain. “It is not surprising,” says the learned historian, “that ecclesiastical jurisprudence should become such an object of admiration and respect, that exemption from civil jurisdiction was courted as a privilege, and conferred as a reward. It is not surprising that even to a rude people, the maxims of the canon law should

¹ Seceders from Catholic unity are amazingly fond of iterating the stale fallacy that Rome *usurped* the supremacy, very many centuries after the death of Christ. What will they say to the following passage from their favourite, and it must be admitted, learned Ranke. “It was not long before the Roman bishops assumed the highest rank. It is, indeed, an idle pretence to assert, that they enjoyed in the first century, or at any period whatever, a supremacy universally acknowledged by East and West; but unquestionably *they speedily attained a consequence that exalted them above all ecclesiastical dignities.*”—Ranke’s *Lives of the Popes*, Chap. I, Page 7. To say that the supremacy has never been universally acknowledged, is merely to solemnly enunciate a self-evident truism—namely, that heresies and heretics have existed from the earliest days of Christianity. Ranke, like all of his communion, must ever find a *reason* for the fulfilment of the promises of Christ. He is anxious to show *how*, by what agencies the Saviour kept his pledge to St. Peter: according to him, the following were the determining causes which enabled the God-head to keep his word. “Rome was one of the most illustrious apostolic sees; here had the greatest number of martyrs shed their blood; the bishops of Rome had borne themselves with pre-eminent firmness during the persecutions, and frequently had they succeeded each other, not so much in office as in martyrdom and death.”—Ranke’s *Lives of the Popes*, Chap. I, Page 7.

appear more equal and more just, than those of the ill-digested jurisprudence which directed all proceedings in civil courts. The one by *permitting judicial combats* left chance and force to be arbiters of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood; the other passed judgment with respect to these by the maxims of equity and the testimony of witnesses. Any error or iniquity in a sentence pronounced by a baron, to whom feudal jurisdiction belonged, was irremediable, because originally it was subject to the review of no superior tribunal: the ecclesiastical law established a regular gradation of courts, through all which a cause may be carried by appeal, until it was determined by that authority which was held to be supreme in the Church. Thus the principles and genius of the canon law, prepared men for approving those three great alterations in the feudal jurisprudence which I have mentioned. But it was not with respect to these points alone, that the canon law suggested improvements beneficial to society. Many of the regulations now deemed the barriers of personal security, or the safeguards of private property, are contrary to the spirit, and repugnant to the maxims of the *civil* jurisprudence known in Europe during several centuries, and were borrowed from the rules and practices of the ecclesiastical courts. By observing the wisdom and equity of the decisions of those courts, men began to perceive the necessity of either deserting the martial tribunals of the barons, or of attempting to reform them.”—*History of Charles the 5th.*

This was the “usurpation,” the “artifice,” with which Rome is often taunted, even to this day. Happily for the people of those ages, the usurpation was in a great degree successful; the artifice attained its purpose. How foully has that high-minded Englishman and courageous martyr, Thomas a Becket, been assailed by ribald tongues, for refusing his aid to replace the clergy and the commons beneath the lordly hoofs, from which they had been rescued with so much difficulty by the wise and good of preceding times. No marvel that the honest, unsophisticated people of England, recognised in the murdered Archbishop, a martyr to the true liberties of England; no

marvel that to mark their respect for his memory, and their detestation of the ruffians by whom he was sacrificed, they brought rich gifts to his tomb, and erected a shrine to his memory worthy of the greatness of his spirit. The contest of which a Becket's death, marks one of the epochs, was that of learning and industry against violence and fraud. The *instincts* of the people seldom mislead them.

Unceasingly did the Church, with solemn and watchful eyes, search after means wherewith to break or loosen the iron network in which a craftily-organised military confederacy had fettered Europe. At length, a great occasion offered, by promptly availing herself of which, she effectually crippled the power of the lords of the soil over their serfs, laid the foundations deep and broad of domestic peace, and cleared the path to rational freedom. I allude to the celebrated crusades for the recovery of Palestine from the dominion of the infidels; a subject upon which more rabid nonsense has been written and discoursed, than on perhaps any other,—always with the exceptions of the Apocalypse, and the Jesuits.

The feudal policy, which created a vast number of petty, independent jurisdictions, feebly controlled by sovereign power, was the source of numerous and as it seemed interminable feuds between rival and ambitious families. Ambition, pride, lust, avarice, and a variety of minor causes, were the prolific source of quarrels, which in the middle ages, descended as heir looms from one generation to another. There was scarcely a family of note that had not its hereditary feud of blood, the sole arbiter of which, according to feudal notions of honour, was the sword. True, the military barons and their retainers had been converted to Christianity: they acknowledged the verity of the Christian revelation, but their ferocious habits, nurtured by the constitution of civil society, were not immediately or easily eradicated. They believed indeed, and trembled before the anathemas of the Church, but the old leaven still worked strongly. The still small voice whispering within them was silenced, as it is at the present day, by the suggestions of false honour; and

thus dissension, violence, rapine, albeit much checked and controlled, continued to distract and disgrace Christendom.

One of the expedients—surely a pious one—which the Church of Rome employed to mitigate an evil she could not subdue, was that of setting apart certain days on which all persons were protected from violence, by being placed under the protection of the “peace of the Church.” Whoever committed violence on their kind under any pretence, at those stated times, were placed under ban. The number of these days of peace, was augmented as rapidly as circumstances would permit. Sundays, the great christian festivals, holy week, and numerous “holydays of obligation” were calendared as *red letter* days of grace. The inmates of churches, monasteries, nunneries, and other pious “foundations,” were protected by this mystic peace. This was something ; but still utterly insufficient to remedy so great an evil. Towards the close of the eleventh century, the opportunity to which I have alluded occurred. It was seized with characteristic sagacity, and proved the means of emancipating the commons from a debasing thralldom, and of giving peace to Christendom.

Pilgrimages to the spot made sacred by the sojourn and sacrifice of the Redeemer, were in those ages of fervent faith very frequent ; and although the holy sepulchre had been long in the possession of infidels, the worshippers that sought its shrine, were protected by the authorities from insult or violence ; till about the end of the eleventh century, when Syria was overrun and subdued by the fanatical Turks. Those followers of the “Prophet” inflicted every kind of outrage upon the unfortunate Christians whom a pious zeal had led to Jerusalem. Many of them were put to death. In 1095, Peter the Hermit, as he was called, moved by their sufferings, raised by his enthusiastic appeals all Christendom to arms, to rescue the holy land from the dominion of infidels, and avenge the slaughtered saints whose bones were whitening on its desecrated soil. Steel-clad Europe threw itself headlong upon Palestine. For nearly two hundred years the struggle was maintained with various fortune ; till the lords of Europe, disgusted with the interminable contest ;

and having accomplished their destiny, turned from the contemplation of the barren prize that mocked their efforts, to look upon a changed world at home. In grasping at the phantom glory, they had lost the substance—power. Wealth, dominion privilege, had passed into plebeian hands. The only resource left the broken chivalry of Europe, was to form themselves into a corporation of knights errant, for the praiseworthy object of succouring distressed damsels and afflicted widows. Fantastic and childish aims, doubtless, but still a much better occupation for *gentlemen* than that of torturing, hanging, or otherwise butchering the hapless dependents whom feudal barbarism had so long subjected to their caprice.

There can be no question that the barbarous usage to which the Christian pilgrims, exercising a long-recognised privilege, were subjected by the Turks, afforded a legitimate ground of war against that people ; and on that ground—unless *all* war is to be pronounced indefensible—I should be content to rest the lawfulness of the crusades ; but the promoters of those expeditions had evidently a higher, holier end in view, than the chastisement of a fanatic rabble. The enterprise suggested a mode whereby the hot and eager spirits of Europe, instead of turning their swords against each other, might be drafted off to gratify their love of strife in foreign and legitimate warfare. It was at once decided that every person that assumed the cross, should be pronounced within “the peace of the Church.” The expedient succeeded to admiration. Intestine feuds ceased at once. Nobles, to furnish themselves fitly forth for so great an enterprize sold lands and privileges: of these some were purchased by and transferred to the crown. Commercial and judicial immunities were bought of the great barons, by communities residing within their jurisdiction, and were secured by charters. Free cities sprung up in Italy, Germany, France, and England. The face of Christendom rapidly changed. Monarchical power basing itself upon popular privilege, grew from a dead letter into a living principle. A spirit of commercial enterprize animated the people, relieved by the foresight and

wisdom of the Church, from the incubus that had so long oppressed them : the conquerors of heathen Rome were in their turn subdued by Christian Rome.¹

Thus was another great "artifice" of the *usurping* Romish Church, happily consummated. It will be seen by and bye, how the oligarchs of Germany, and especially of England, avenged themselves and regained their lost privilege and power, by the help of the "Reformation." Compelled to patiently "bide their time;" long abstinence gave wonderful keenness to their appetite, and they gorged ravenously.—

"Blessing their maw, destined to that good hour."

This rapid sketch of the progress of the Church would be unpardonably incomplete, did it not contain some notice of the *intestine* discord, follies, crimes, which impeded her progress, and invited the attacks of the avowed foes to her peace.² I shall not insult the understanding of the reader by any *argument* to prove that the misconduct, or the crimes of individuals, cannot affect the character of the institution of which they are unworthy members. The angelic host was not contaminated by the fellowship of Satan and his angels, cast out as soon as they rebelled.

Soon after the barbarian spoilers had embraced, some only outwardly, but millions in sincerity and truth, the Christian faith; wealth and splendour were, by the pious munificence of the faithful, showered upon the Church. That wealth and splendour,—the ever eagerly sought toys of poor humanity,—awakened the cupidity of many unscrupulous and ambitious men, whose

¹ There can be no question that a vast majority of the crusaders, were solely actuated by a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of Christendom. The promoters of the expeditions were also, there is no shadow of a doubt, animated by the same spirit; but the Church, amidst her higher and more solemn duties, never lost sight of her *temporal* mission. Hearts that vibrated to the eternal melody of the spheres, were also tremulous to the still sad music of humanity.

² Those fearful persons who are anxious to conceal or gloze over the sins and follies of certain dignitaries of the Church, lest *religion* suffer by the misconduct of its professors, would have voted for the erasure from the sacred page, of the narrative of the denial of Christ by St. Peter; lest, peradventure, his sinfulness should weaken the force and authority of his epistles.

lust of worldly distinction was their only God and guide. They entered into the service of the Church, as they would into any other that promised wealth and power. Many of these men were members of, or connected with noble families, whose vast local influence, enabled them too often, to set at defiance, the entreaties, the expostulations, the denunciations of the heads of the Church. They were in the Church, but not of the Church; wolves in sheep's clothing. The soldier's iron mail was scarcely concealed by the bishop's robe of peace; the battle axe was more familiar to him than the pastoral crook or the sacred crozier.¹ The temporal weakness of several of the pontiffs after the fall of the Carlovingian dynasty, caused a relaxation of the discipline of the clergy. Many priests, spite of the prohibitory canon law, contracted marriage. Emperors, kings, potentates, claimed the right of practically nominating to rich cures of souls; and, thus it was, that notwithstanding the great body of the priesthood were ever faithful to their sacred trust, scandal was brought upon religion by a few unworthy ministers, and the mocking spirit of unbelief exulted in the anticipation that the days of faith and hope were numbered.

The mocking spirit was suddenly and effectually rebuked. In 1073, Gregory the 7th, better known as Hildebrand, one of the most heroic and holy men that ever existed, ascended the papal throne, to purge and chasten and purify the Church committed to his keeping. The celibacy of the clergy was strictly enforced; the claim of secular princes to dispose of the heritage of the Church, was sternly and successfully resisted. Simony was effectually repressed. Neither imperial intrigue nor imperial violence, although seconded by domestic faction, could shake the resolution, or withstand the energies of this greatest of pontiffs. He

¹ The spots which stain the history of the Church, slight as they comparatively are, were principally stamped upon it by the violent hands of rude heathens, disguised in priestly robes. To conceal their real apathy and indifference to religion of any kind, they were ever eager to persecute. The relenting pontiffs were obliged to have recourse to the severest penalties, to force them to desist from their rigorous persecution of the Albigenses; with which infamous sect, by the way, M. Basnage and others, strangely confound the Vaudois, a very different class of schismatics. See Pluquet. Tome I. Article, Albigensis.

died in voluntary exile, exclaiming with the vehemence of truth, "I have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity ;" but he left the ineffaceable impress of his gigantic mind upon the Church for which he struggled, suffered, and died. He restored her momentarily fainting energies, and his fervent spirit ascended to God, sustained by the conviction that he had thoroughly purged HIS threshing floor. Had *all* his successors possessed his unbending firmness and heroic virtues, the *pretexts*, ridiculous as they were in reality, for effecting the reformation, would have lost all colour.

A general outline of the persecutions, perils, triumphs, and defeats of the Church, thus rapidly sketched, we may pause for a few moments to consider the state of Europe, and of England especially, at the commencement of the sixteenth century,—on the eve of the furious outburst of fanaticism, which reformed the Church by rending it asunder, and bequeathed to us—sad heritage !—the gathering in of the full harvest of strife, turmoil, black discontent, sown broadcast at that fearful time by the pure hands of Harry the 8th, his wretched son and daughter, and their German and English predecessors and associates.

The papal chair was filled by Leo the 10th, the amiable and munificent patron of arts and letters. The invention of printing, the revival of ancient learning, and the zeal with which literature was cultivated, seemed indications of a happier time about to dawn upon the world. Higher conquests than the soldier can hope to achieve, truer glories than were ever reaped on battle-fields began to excite the ambitious energies of the stirring spirits of the age. The fruits of the long struggle between spirit and brute matter, learning and ignorance, Christianity and heathenism, seemed whitening unto a peaceful harvest. The English throne was filled by a youth of promise, Henry the 8th, wielding an unchallenged sceptre ; whilst to add to his security and power, the wars of the roses had effectually thinned the ranks and crippled the fortunes of the turbulent barons, who had begun to recover from the *calamity* of the crusades. The chivalrous Francis the 1st, wore the diadem of France, and the hereditary crowns of Spain, with the elective crown imperial of Germany,

graced the brows of the renowned Charles the 5th. Thus organised, Christendom promised itself a long respite from danger and from *glory*; when a new element of strife was recklessly thrown into the seething cauldron of ambitious passions, —and the world was again on fire!

The tempers of large bodies of men, especially in Germany, were at this period ripe for change. Princely, and aristocratic families generally, shorn of their wealth by extravagance or war, looked with longing eyes upon the possessions of the Church, —the pious alms-gifts of centuries. The minds of many of the commons, shaken and disturbed by the accelerated movement of the age, and the outpourings through the printing press of what is facetiously called knowledge, rankled with discontent. This dangerous feeling was zealously nourished by the rapacious nobles and gentry, and artfully directed for their own vile ends against the abuses, real and imaginary, of the Church; until, so rapid was the march of intellect, that it soon came to be esteemed a work of enlightened “liberality,” and a vast onward step in civilization, to enrich the landlord noble with the property specially devised and set apart for the wretched, the indigent, and the helpless!

A very slight spark kindled the combustible mass into a flame. Leo the 10th, in his anxiety to render the church of St. Peter at Rome worthy the capital of the Christian world, authorised, what has been oddly enough called, the *sale* of indulgences, for the purpose of completing that great object. A Dominican friar, named Tetzel, was chosen by Albert, archbishop of Metz, to dispense them in Saxony. The absurdities, the exaggerations indulged in by this half-bigot, half-fool, afforded a glorious opportunity, for an even *then* somewhat celebrated Augustinian friar, Martin Luther, to vent the passionate fanaticism, spiritual pride and bitterness, which had gradually accumulated in his pent bosom. The spirit of evil could not have selected a more fitting instrument. Able, learned, eloquent, of fair morals, vehement, zealous, a very Lucifer in pride, he was precisely adapted for his work. The hour had struck,—the man was at hand.

The true and simple doctrine of indulgences, so senselessly attacked, and often so absurdly *excused*, is a veritable christian doctrine, if there be one. It has been taught and enforced in all Christian Churches from the earliest times. The Anglican church taught and enforced it; although, it is probable, she has now dropped it *sub silentio* along with other reformation-retained primitive practices. It results naturally from the sacrament of penance, or earthly satisfaction for crime. Thus:—a rich merchant of Manchester is, we will suppose, enjoined by the spiritual physician to whom he has revealed the ulcers of his soul, a certain amount of canonical penance, such as fasting, spiritual exercises, &c. A famine breaks out in the neighbourhood of the rich penitent, he has stores of corn, and the priest *indulges* him, to substitute for his own fasts, the feeding of the famishing poor. An indulgence in fact is simply the substitution of one meritorious act for another. Leo the 10th, proclaimed to all who would contribute to the good work, as he esteemed it, of building a temple worthy of the glory of the Christian worship, that such good work should be held in lieu of other canonical penance. Just as the high priest of the Jews, might, at the building of the temple of Jerusalem, have commuted the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil, for gifts necessary to the erection of the holy place.

Tetzel was perhaps a pious, well-meaning man, but it is quite clear that he was a very foolish and intemperate one, and pious fools with their pious frauds have inflicted more injury upon the ancient Church, than all its open and avowed enemies have ever been able to effect. Luther declaimed with force and effect against the assumptions of Tetzel. The people, ever eager after novelty, were greatly excited. Leo, imagining the strange and meaningless hubbub would pass away of itself, was indifferent, perhaps careless. From canvassing the doctrine of indulgences, with which he started, professing at the time the utmost veneration for the person and office of the Pope, Luther emboldened by impunity, advanced in his *protesting* course, till he had so blotted and blurred almost every dogma contained in

the Christian's Book of Faith, that it was no longer the same volume ; in the stead of which old guide and reference, he tendered for the acceptance of mankind a hastily arranged collection of fugitive leaves, filled with his own dangerous and contradictory conceits. He concluded his *reforming* and erratic career, by practically declaring that sound Christianity had been unknown in the world, during the fifteen hundred years that had elapsed between the sacrifice on Calvary, and the confession of Augsburg; and that the pope, for whose office, he, during his first reforming transports, expressed so much veneration, was antichrist!! This pleasant and ingenious after-thought of Luther, has since become very popular with the lower class of no-popery brawlers. Thus began and thus ended, the book of the acts of the apostle, Luther. To be able to estimate the true value of the last chapters, it is only necessary to read the first, and *vice versa*.¹

The history of the church on the continent of Europe, is its history in our own England, where it has suffered *three* reformations. Planted in the second century by Pope Eleutherius,² it was effectually reformed in the fifth by the Saxons, who, forcing the British church to take shelter in the fastnesses of Wales, set up Woden and Thor in the temples dedicated to

¹ In 1517, Luther thus addressed the Pope :—"Wherefore, most holy Father I throw myself prostrate at your feet, with all that I have, or am. My life and death are in your hands. Call or re-call me, approve or condemn as you please. I shall acknowledge your voice as the voice of Christ, who presides and speaks in your person." Three years afterwards, 1520, his writings having been condemned by the same Pope, he styles him "the impious judge, the apostate, the antichrist, the blasphemer of the divine word;" meaning, doubtless, by the last phrase, Master Luther's divine word.

² A *Pauline* church in England, has been extemporised by imaginative no-popery writers, in order to base, in some way or other, the Anglican establishment upon an apostolic foundation. Those simple souls that attach credence to so vain a dream, cannot do better than consult Lingard's Anglo-Saxon Church, in which work the learned and laborious historian has thoroughly demolished the foolish fiction. The excellent jest of Exeter-hall, that the revelations which Henry the 8th, Edward, and Elizabeth, vouchsafed to England, were divinely-inspired expositions of the old faith, lost to the world for fifteen hundred years, derives all its piquancy, like this *Pauline* fable, from the matchless invention and exquisite impudence which it displays.

the living God. A hundred years afterwards, when, as we have seen, comparative peace was established in Europe, Pope Gregory deputed St. Augustine, afterwards the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and about thirty monks, to reclaim the fair heritage into the fold of Christ. St. Augustine and his monks were miraculously successful. The Saxon Church grew and flourished; and so firmly imbedded were its roots in the genial soil, that the utmost efforts of the Danes, in the eighth and ninth centuries, failed, after a bloody and protracted strife, to effect more than a partial reform of it. Woden and Thor were again set up, but their dominion was very limited: thanks to Alfred and the heroic Saxon clergy, the Danes were not only effectually resisted, but reclaimed from heathenism. They came to curse and destroy; they remained to believe and pray.

The Catholic clergy and people of England, undisturbed by reformers for a period of seven hundred years, continued on their way rejoicing—planting fruitful and unfading evergreens at frequent intervals along their steep and thorny path.¹

The destroyer came at last. Inflamed by brutal lust, swollen with insolence and pride, Henry the 8th, the first Protestant monarch of England, aided by a rapacious oligarchy, wrenched the English church from its connection with the centre and sign of unity, Rome; cast down and plundered the temples of reli-

¹ The constitutional triumphs of those days were not mere glittering mockeries, set up to dazzle the fool multitude, and profitable only to trading politicians. In every struggle with baronial or kingly power, the principal object was *the bettering the condition of the people*. The declaration of right, set forth in Magna Charta, extorted from John by the barons, led by the archbishop of Canterbury, was chiefly valuable because by the influence of the primate and his brother bishop, a clause was introduced, to protect the substance of the humbler classes from both royal and lordly exaction:—"A freeman shall be amerced in proportion to his offence, saving his contentment; and a merchant, saving his merchandise; and a villain, saving his waggonage." In modern times, the Commons house of parliament has become the most efficient instrument the world has ever seen, for imposing enormous burdens on the people. In a simpler and honester age, the chief care of that house was to *shield* the nation from such exactions. It cannot be denied that, however rapid may have been the "march of intellect," the march of taxation has been vastly more swift. *Cheap* knowledge, the boast of our day, seems somewhat of a misnomer, when one remembers that eight hundred millions sterling has been the purchase money.

gion and the patrimony of the poor; trampled on all laws, human and divine; and, with crowning blasphemy, proclaimed himself, from amid the ruins of the Christian Church, Christ's true vicegerent upon earth—the Rock once promised, but long delayed, built upon, which the Church was to bid defiance to the gates of hell!!

Had the more earnest reformers been pious, Christian men, instead of prideful, reckless revolutionists, their fiery zeal might have been of essential service in rooting abuses out of the Church of God. They had the example of Hildebrand to guide and enlighten them. There were now, as in his day, the arrogant claims of princes and nobles to be resisted; the laws against simony to be vigorously enforced; worldly and dissolute men, who dishonoured the sacred habit which they wore, to be driven from the sanctuary; whilst complaints of malversation, by powerful persons, of funds bequeathed for pious and charitable purposes, demanded inquiry and redress. To effect these great and legitimate reforms, it was chiefly necessary to strengthen the hands of the sovereign pontiffs. Well would it have been for themselves and us had the self-commissioned reformers pursued this wise and salutary course. How differently they acted, a brief enumeration of the principal occupations of their pious lives during the first years of the new era of grace will amply testify.

In England the great work was mainly effected under the superintendence of the saintly Harry the 8th, Edward the 6th, and Elizabeth the 1st and last.

In Germany and Switzerland, Luther, Calvin, Muncer, and Boccold laboured diversely in the same holy cause.

Here is a summary of their deeds. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Henry the 8th, assisted and encouraged by Cranmer and Cromwell, was busy murdering his wives, burning or strangling all who dared question *his* spiritual supremacy, and distributing the pillage of churches, monasteries, and houses of hospitality amongst his parasites and slaves.

Edward the 6th, also assisted and encouraged by Cranmer, was murdering his uncle, and burning, hanging, torturing, and imprisoning those who refused to conform to the faith as delivered by *his* juvenile infallibility.

Elizabeth, besides murdering her helpless guest and cousin, was busy for very many years with the blood of her subjects.

Hundreds of pious and brave Englishmen and women were sacrificed on the scaffold by this true daughter of a sanguinary father. Hundreds, less fortunate, perished miserably of long and hopeless imprisonment, or were driven into exile for the crime of refusing to deny the God of their fathers. This reign was one long butchery.

These three murderers were the three apostles of the English reformation.¹

The German illuminati were also actively engaged. Dr. Martin Luther, himself a perjured friar, having contracted marriage with a perjured nun, Miss Catharine De Boro, was variously occupied, denouncing the Pope and good works, translating the Bible, preaching the lawfulness of adultery,² giving licenses under his hand and seal to great men for *indulgence* in polygamy, crying up justification by faith *alone*, and cursing and denouncing the more consistent of his followers who acted upon that blessed doctrine.

¹ The sad dearth of saints in the Protestant calendar suggests a regret that the two first named worthies were not canonized by holy Cranmer, whose spirit partook of their divine illumination, and who participated so eagerly in their distinguishing acts. The "Maiden Queen" might have been made to figure on the same brilliant and consistent page, as a "virgin," far worthier of Anglican commemoration than the second and sinless Eve, so strangely erased from the hearts and affections of *sound* Protestants.

² "If Sarah refuse take Hagar! For my part, I cannot oppose the man who may wish to marry several wives; and I do not think such plurality contrary to Holy Scripture." Philipp, Landgrave of Hesse, urged the apostle to give practical effect to this doctrine by gratifying him with a license to commit polygamy. The landgrave urged his suit in these terms:—"Before God I ask why I may not do that which Abraham, Jacob, David, Lamech, and Solomon have done?" This weighty reasoning finally determined Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and four other *divines*, to grant the landgrave, the "indulgence" he demanded. They wrote, signed, and forwarded a formal license, as required. The instrument is dated the Feast of St. Nicholas, 1539.—Memoirs of Luther, written by himself, and translated by M. Michelet.

John Calvin was burning Servetus for denying the infallibility of John Calvin.

Muncer and Boccold were sad fellows. They had improved upon Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone, arguing that when once the baptismal waters of regeneration had purged and sanctified the soul, man might, without sin, and without fear, do whatever seemed good in his own eyes. A kind of socialist republic was established at Munster, in Westphalia, where these heaven-taught doctrines were carried out to their legitimate conclusions. Fornication, adultery, murder—every variety of crime by which souls were ever stained and lost had free range there, until, after a sanguinary struggle which lasted fifteen months, these "first fruits" of the reformation were put down by the Catholic bishop of Munster.

It is right to state, that Mr. Luther cruelly repudiated his own offspring, and, vain madman! affected to assume the attributes to the chair of St. Peter, in order to put down the scandal: he was of course laughed at. "Surely," exclaimed the logical anabaptists "our private interpretation of the meanings of Scripture, is as likely to be right as that of Mr. Luther!" No doubt of it.

For the *manner* of effecting the blessed change in England, the reader must consult the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

The path along which we have hitherto traced the progress of the Church, dim, painful, and thorny doubtless, but momentarily widening and brightening, led over an *elevated* region. The heads of the wayfarers were encircled by the stars of faith, the clouds and mists of doubt were under their feet. We must now descend from that lofty and firm platform, to follow the tortuous and staggering steps of the reformed church down the inclined plane it was recklessly hurried by violent hands:—the only resting place of which dread path of doubt, is stark, stony, unbelief!

What a different aspect would the world now present but for that terrible schism; judging by what had been previously effected by the primitive Church, in spite of apparently insuperable obstacles! whose fault, or rather whose crime is it, that thick clouds of paganism still darken and defile the earth? “Catholic and Protestant controversialists,” sneers a lecturer of the Paris university, M. Edgar Quinet, “when entering the arena to challenge the judgment of reason should address the goddess in the words of the ancient gladiator to the Roman emperors—‘Those who are about to die salute thee.’” Who have rendered Christians obnoxious to this infidel jibe? Who but those that by placing the primitive Church on its defence, necessitated the scandalous strife!

I now proceed to place the doings and characters of the great reformers in a clear and familiar light.

As my principal object is to depict the artificers of the *English* devastation, in their true colours, I shall very briefly dismiss their precursors in the work of ruin, the German and Swiss reformers. Besides, in this matter the school phrase, *ex uno disce omnes*, is strictly applicable. Harry the 8th was a Luther crowned and armed; Cranmer exhibited but an exaggerated copy of the duplicity and meanness of Bucer.

The immediate cause which induced Luther to embrace a religious life in a convent of Augustinian friars, was the sudden death of a companion, killed by lightning whilst standing by his side. It is probable that his mental constitution never completely recovered the shock. Repeatedly during his fierce and stormy career, his mind seemed tottering on the verge of absolute insanity. His alternate despair and frantic exultation—his fancied interviews with the devil in bodily shape, as related by himself—his melancholy doubt and gloom, and still more melancholy mirth and presumption—all seem to indicate a mind unsettled, staggering on the very brink of dissolution. Nothing but his matchless pride—his o’ermastering iron *will*, sustained him till death removed him from a world which had become wearisome and hateful. The shadows of death extinguished his fiery pride. He who had toiled to subvert a Church which dated from the death of Christ, by novel and forced interpretations of texts of Scripture, but a brief space before his dissolution wrote these words:—“I acknowledge that I am uncertain whether I rightly understand a single psalm. Our life is but a beginning and something of a progress.” Two days only before his death (February 16th, 1546,) he thus writes to Eisleben:—“And let no person think he knows enough of the holy Scriptures unless, during a hundred years, he has governed churches like the prophets, or Christ, or his apostles. We are, indeed, poor beggars—*Hoc est verum.*”¹ Self-convicted prophet of error, where, in that dread hour, was your sure hope and trust! The shifting sands upon which you had so long affected to rest secure, sank

¹ Memoirs of Luther written by himself, translated by M. Michelet.

by your own confession, under you. In that fearful strait who stood beside you to damn or save?—the demon that in health and manhood haunted your imagination, inflamed your pride, and in bodily shape, as *you* declared, whispered in your ear polluting blasphemies; or, happily, the Christ of your youth, to pardon and to bless even as the shadow of the dial was falling on the twelfth hour!

“ His sins were horrible; but so wide arms
Hath goodness infinite, that it receives
All who turn to it.”

Luther, it is admitted, was the most able, and, perhaps, the best-intentioned of the reformers. When the substance of the Church, the store-house of the needy, was diverted from its legitimate purposes to satisfy the greedy avarice of reckless princes and nobles, he declared to Melancthon, who concurred with him, “that had he foreseen such an issue, he would never have separated from Rome.” The mist had fallen from his eyes, but indomitable pride forbade him to publicly acknowledge his grievous error. He could not but feel (for he had strong affections) remorse and pity when he beheld the asylum of his youth—where stood the altar before which he had so often fervently prayed to the Giver of all good gifts—plundered, desecrated, turned into stalls for cattle. The influence of early associations, spite of all efforts to stifle it, must have strongly moved him. The sandal tree, says an Eastern poet, imparts its fragrance to the axe that hews it.

The new German-Swiss christianity attained speedy perfection after the following manner: its *progress* exhibits a sliding scale quite innocent of *rests*.

Luther denounced good works, and the Pope, but retained the belief in a real presence in the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

Calvin preached the truly mild and merciful doctrine of the predetermined, inevitable salvation of the few, and the predetermined, inevitable damnation of the many. He appears to admit (his constitutions are not very clear on this point) a mys-

terious spiritual presence in the Eucharist. He maintained the lawfulness of putting heretics to death, and carried his doctrine into practice. He constituted himself pope, dictator, and judge of the inhabitants of Geneva.

Zuinglius and Carlostad denied that Christ was in any manner, spiritual or otherwise, present in the sacrifice of the altar.

Socinus maintained (a great step in advance) that Christ was a mere mortal. He threw the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation to the winds.

Muncer and Boccold announced the immediate reign of the saints on earth, whose holy rule was to be distinguished by a community of goods and women.

Many lesser lights arose, but these were the principal luminaries kindled at Luther's torch. The dark procession we have seen joined in our own day by Straus and other mocking sceptics, and, fitly closing all, steals onwards a gigantic shadow—black, horrible, icy Atheism! *Facilis descensus Avern!*

Enough of the German tragedy: a still darker volume challenges inspection—the record of the crimes of the English reformers. Especially would I entreat the patient attention of my countrymen to the acts and characters of the first Protestant monarch, Henry the 8th; the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer; the first Protestant Vicar-General, Thomas Cromwell; and the first Protestant Parliaments.

The last of the Catholic kings of England, Henry the 7th, died¹ in the year of our Lord 1509, leaving an undisputed crown and an overflowing treasury to his only surviving son and successor, Henry the 8th. The youthful monarch married, shortly after his accession, the Princess Catharine of Spain—a lady of great personal attractions, of the purest morals, and

¹ This monarch was one of the best lawgivers for the people that England has known. Lord Bacon pronounces him the best after Edward the 1st. "His laws," says that great man, "are deep, not vulgar; not made upon the spur of a particular occasion for the present, but out of prudence for the future, to make the state of his people still more and more happy, *after the manner of the legislators in ancient and heroical times.*" It was Henry the 7th that admitted the poor to sue in *forma pauperis*.

the loftiest character. She was nominally, so to speak, the widow of the young king's deceased elder brother, Arthur, to whom she had been espoused, but owing to the constitutional infirmity of the prince, who died shortly after the ceremony, the marriage had never been consummated. This fact having been proved to the satisfaction of the king, his council, and Pope Julius the 2nd, a dispensation was obtained for the marriage of Henry and Catharine. It was immediately celebrated with great pomp and much rejoicing. Catharine bore her husband three children, two of whom died in their infancy; the other, Mary, afterwards ascended the English throne. During seventeen years the king lived happily with his virtuous, high-minded consort. At the end of that period a change came over the spirit of the lusty and amorous monarch. The charms of Mistress Anne Boleyn, a young and lively lady of the court, had ensnared his affections; and, to add to his mental perturbation, his conscience became suddenly alarmed lest, peradventure, he had been unconsciously living in unlawful intercourse with his wife during the long period of his married life. The coyness of Miss Boleyn, who half encouraged, half repulsed his advances, inflamed his passions and gave poignancy to his religious scruples. The queen was unfortunately ten years the senior of her royal mate, whilst her fascinating maid of honour, who had but just passed her twentieth summer, in addition to the charms of her person (she had been educated at the court of France, whither she accompanied the king's sister Mary, contracted to Louis the 12th,) "played, danced, and sung with more grace than any other lady of the court, and the gaiety of her conversation, with the vivacity of her disposition, attracted a crowd of admirers." Poor Catharine! No wonder the king's sensitive mind was troubled, and that he was impatient for a divorce. It was, indeed, a "case of conscience."

A king possessed of absolute power will seldom lack instruments to accomplish any purpose, however iniquitous; and Henry was singularly fortunate in securing the services of two

of the most subtle hypocrites that ever served the devil in the livery of heaven—Cranmer and Cromwell.

The trusted minister of the king, during the first twenty years of his reign, was the celebrated Cardinal Wolsey, who, from an unworthy complaisance with the wishes of his sovereign—a complaisance he afterwards so poignantly remembered and bitterly regretted—exerted himself to procure a sentence of divorce from Clement the 7th, the then reigning pontiff.¹ The Pope, at this time, was confined a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo by the armies of Charles the 5th, Queen Catharine's relative. Henry tendered him, as a bribe to guilty compliance with his request, the treasures and the arms of England. Clement, believing, doubtless, that the extravagant infatuation of the king would pass away, temporised, and, after many delays, appointed a commission, consisting of the Cardinals Campeggio, Wolsey, and others, to inquire, before the royal parties in England, into the grounds alleged as sufficing reasons for the divorce.

The affair dragged its slow length along for nearly three years, when, all hope of effecting his wishes by the agency of the Pope being necessarily given up, Henry found himself compelled either to abandon the faith in which he had been nurtured, and in defence of which he had not long before entered the lists of controversy against Luther, or to sacrifice his pas-

¹ The pretext for demanding a divorce was, of course, that it was unlawful for the head of the Church to grant a dispensation, authorising the marriage of a widow with her deceased husband's brother—albeit *the marriage had no issue, and had not even been consummated*. This was argued scripturally, upon the authority of Moses, notwithstanding that lawgiver had (Deuteronomy, 25, 5) commanded the brother to marry the brother's widow, *when he died without children*; thus plainly showing that the general prohibition in Leviticus, admitted of a dispensing power. The king's eager advocates forgot, also, that Christ approved of the exception in Deuteronomy, in answer to the Sadducees who proposed that law to him. But the religious and moral controversy was a mere pretext—a vile farce suggested by the necessity of finding excuses for the indulgence of the king's beastly lust. The power of the Pope to grant a dispensation in such a case, *and under such circumstances*, had never before been disputed. Well might Wolsey exclaim in bitterness of heart, when his own hour of trial came—"Had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs."

sion.¹ Queen Catharine had but once appeared, and then under protest, before the court appointed to take cognisance of the king's demand of a divorce. Henry was there in state. As soon as the queen's name was called she rose and protested against the proceedings of the court on these grounds:—"Because she was a stranger, because the judges held benefices in the realm, the gift of her adversary, and because she had good reason to believe that justice could not be obtained in a court constituted like the present." The judges having refused her appeal, she rose a second time, and, accompanied by her maids, threw herself at the king's feet. "Sire," said she, "I beseech you, pity me; a woman and a stranger, without an assured friend, and without an indifferent counsellor. I take God to witness that I have always been to you a true and lawful wife; that I have made it my constant study to seek your pleasure; that I have loved all whom you loved, whether they deserved it or not—whether they were friends to me or foes. I have been your wife for years. I have brought you children. God knows, that when I came to your bed I was a virgin; and I put it to your own conscience to say whether it was not so. If there be any offence which can be alleged against me, I consent to depart with infamy: if not, then, I pray you do me justice." She then rose and retired.² Henry

¹ To all the remonstrances of the king the Pope returned the same answer—that he could not refuse to Catharine what the ordinary forms of justice required; that he was devoted to the king, and anxious to gratify him in any manner conformable with equity and honour; but that the king ought not to require from him what was evidently unjust; and they would find that when his conscience was concerned he was equally insensible to considerations of interest or of danger.

² Shakspeare, in whose magic page the principal personages that illustrated the heroic times of England are mirrored with such vividness and truth, has, in his historic play of Henry the 8th, done justice to the lofty virtues and the spotless character of this amiable and most unhappy queen. An atmosphere of grace and purity seems to float around her, from her first appearance till the close of the sad and touching scene in which her chastened soul seems almost visibly to exhale towards the heaven to which bright spirits beckon her. Bearing in mind that Anne Boleyn was the mother of Elizabeth, Shakspeare's sovereign and patroness, it is only necessary to compare this scene with that in which Catharine's rival appears, to arrive at a pretty correct estimate of the opinion entertained by the great dramatist of the relative merits of the heroine of the reformation and

was, it is said, moved by this affecting appeal ; but if it were so, the impression was transitory. The dictates of his passion for the maid overpowered the supplications for justice of the royal mistress ; and he persisted in his iniquitous design with all the reckless obstinacy which characterised his relentless, savage nature. At this very time he was soliciting the learned universities of Europe to pronounce in favour of the divorce, and carefully concealing from them the all-important fact, that Catharine's marriage with Arthur had never been consummated ; thus manifestly, if indirectly, imputing the vilest infamy to his excellent and virtuous queen.

The struggle between the passion and piety of the king was neither long nor doubtful. Wolsey was disgraced, and in 1529, a new cabinet was formed, of which, says the bishop of Bayonne, then a resident at the English court, and a great favourer of the divorce, Miss Boleyn was the real chief. "The Duke of Norfolk is chief of this council, and in his absence Suffolk ; and above all of them Mademoiselle Anne." Decisive measures were soon resolved upon and adopted. Mr. Thomas Cromwell, formerly secretary to Cardinal Wolsey, boldly advised the king, since the Pope of Rome would not consent to his wishes, to constitute *himself* pope of his own realm, to fearlessly assume the office of vicegerent of Christ's church in England, and, his spiritual supremacy once recognised by Parliament, *divorce*

her victim. Anne's heroics will scarcely impose more upon the dullest reader than they did upon quick-witted Lady Denny. It is a very significant and instructive fact that Shakspeare, who lived, as it were, on the very edge of the great scramble, has not, throughout his immortal pages, written one word in approbation of that "glorious" event or its abettors. He must have been familiar with the beastly fictions which the plunderers of nunneries and monasteries invented to excuse or justify their rapacity ; but they found no echo in his works. On the contrary, whenever he introduces nuns (*Measure for Measure*) or friars (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Much ado about Nothing*, &c.), they are models of saintly purity, guileless wisdom, and simplest honesty. Compelled to flatter Elizabeth, he veils the bitterest irony beneath a dazzling dress of glittering poetry. "The heavens *will* have her." "*A most unspotted lily shall she pass.*" All this, be it remembered, written at a time when Elizabeth's *virginity* was the common mock. To add to the cruelty of the sarcasm, he places the lying *compliment* in the mouth of Archbishop Crammer !

himself through the willing agency of his own servant-priests, and then, with their saintly sanction, espouse the lady of his love. This bold counsel was graciously received and promptly acted upon; the adviser was sworn of the privy council; and shortly afterwards Henry was invested by parliament with the spiritual supremacy of the English and Irish churches.

The see of Canterbury being vacant, it was deemed politic to procure the assent of the pontiff to the appointment of Cranmer—a pliant priest—to that important office. This was easily effected. Cranmer was consecrated on the 30th of March, 1533, with *something more*¹ than the usual ceremonies. The new archbishop set about his appointed task with much gravity. The first Protestant monarch, at “*the earnest and pathetic entreaties*” of the first Protestant archbishop, gravely *permitted* the new primate to perform a duty which he said he owed to God and the king, namely—“to put an end to the doubts respecting Henry’s marriage;” but in graciously complying with the archbishop’s humble request, the new head of the church reminded his mitred groom “that he was nothing more than the principal minister of the spiritual jurisdiction belonging to the crown, and that the sovereign had no superior on earth, and was not subject to the laws of any earthly creature.” Some

¹ “The necessary bulls were expedited in the usual manner, and in a very few days after their arrival the consecration followed. But by what casuistry could the archbishop elect, who was well acquainted with the services expected of him, reconcile it with his conscience to swear at his consecration canonical obedience to the papal authority? With the royal approbation, he called four witnesses and a notary into the chapter-house of St. Stephen’s, at Westminster, and in their presence declared that by the oath of obedience to the Pope, which, for the sake of form, he should be obliged to take, he did not bind himself to anything contrary to the law of God or prejudicial to the rights of the king, or prohibitory of such reforms as *he* might judge useful to the Church of England.

* * * * * The question of the privacy or publicity of Cranmer’s protest has been set at rest by an extract from the notarial instrument in Lambeth MSS. 1536, published by Mr. Todd, i. 65. It proves beyond the possibility of doubt that he read the protest once only, and that before witnesses privately assembled in the chapter-house. In church he did no more *than say to the same witnesses* that he would swear in the sense of the protest made by him already; but there is no evidence that any one besides them heard his words, or that any one else was acquainted with the articles of the protest.”—Dr. Lingard’s History of England, vol. vi, page 192.

one has expressed surprise that the Roman Augurs could look each other in the face without laughing. That Cranmer and his master could go through this impious farce with unrelaxed muscles, is surely quite as wonderful.

Cranmer had no sooner obtained the required *permission* than he cited the queen to appear before him at Ampt-hill, near Dunstable. Her highness did not—and it was well *known* she would not—honour the summons with the slightest notice. The necessary forms were hurried through; the queen was pronounced “verily and manifestly contumacious;” and Cranmer, by virtue of his “judicial and pastoral authority,” decreed that Henry’s marriage with Catharine had been “null and void from the very beginning.”

The impatience of Henry had not permitted him to await the conclusion of these formalities. Cranmer’s decree was pronounced in May, but the king had married Miss Boleyn on the 25th of the preceding January. It was necessary therefore that the archbishop’s decision should be amended somewhat; and the holy and convenient man, in obedience to his master’s orders, re-assembled his court on the 21st of May, and officially pronounced, always in virtue of his judicial and pastoral authority, that Henry and Anne “were, and had been, joined in lawful matrimony, that this marriage had been public and manifest, and that he moreover *confirmed* it by his judicial and pastoral authority.” A short time afterwards, the coronation of the new queen was performed with extraordinary magnificence; and on the 7th of September in the same year, Anne was delivered of a girl, afterwards Queen Elizabeth. Catharine, followed by the tears and prayers of the wise and good, retired to die in obscurity. Her daughter Mary was taken from her, and even her dying request to see her child was refused by the iron-hearted king. For the sake of that daughter, whom she still cherished a hope would one day ascend the throne, she suffered patiently the various indignities heaped upon her; disdaining to purchase a respite from persecution, by any acknowledgment of the invalidity of her marriage, or by foregoing the title of queen. Who

can feel surprised that the sufferings of this heroic mother, and the capricious tyranny of hostile queens, should have hardened the religious antipathies, soured the quick temper, and inflamed the vindictive passions which the Princess Mary inherited from her father; and which, when power was given her, she so unhappily displayed!

Henry had now thrown off the mask, he had before so loosely worn. It was high treason to hint an objection to his assumption of spiritual supremacy. His religious opinions, whatever they were, *or might be*, were declared to be orthodox, by act of parliament; and it was death to decline an oath, to firmly believe, not only what Henry at the time might profess, but whatever he *might at any future time* declare to be the true faith. This present, prospective, immutable, changing infallibility, was by parliament declared "hereditary" in the crown. The consciences, as well as the liberties of the people, were thus placed at the mercy of this excellent monarch. This was a delicious first fruit of the abolition of *Popery*. A prudent man might perhaps, by a careful and diligent perusal of the "King's Boke," ascertain his *present* belief, but he could scarcely know himself securely orthodox on the morrow, as in the meantime a new edition might have issued, or a new article have been added.

Before proceeding with other matters, it will be as well perhaps, to finish the history of this king's wives.

On the 8th of January, 1536, Queen Catharine died. On the day of her funeral, Anne Boleyn, although the Court wore mourning, appeared dressed in robes of rich yellow silk, and exclaimed in the joy of her vain heart that "she was now indeed a queen." Poor wretch! her doom was already sealed in the gloomy and relentless mind of the tyrant. A fresh face had caught his fancy; a new lust inflamed his blood. In the midst of her heartless exultation at the death of Catharine, Anne perceived Jane Seymour, the daughter of a Wiltshire knight, seated on the king's knee. Amazed, stunned by a sight so ominous, and frantic with jealousy and terror, the unfortunate lady was immediately seized with the pains of premature labour, and

in a few hours was delivered of a dead male child. An accusation of adultery, alleged to have been committed with her men-servants, and of incest with her brother, Lord Rochford, was trumped up against her, and on the 2nd of May she was committed a close prisoner to the tower.¹ Conducted to the room in which she had passed the night previous to her coronation, the unhappy lady, falling on her knees, exclaimed "Jesus have mercy on me!" The lieutenant of the tower, to whom, in frantic and despairing accents, she was protesting her innocence, interrupted her by remarking, that "were she the poorest subject in the realm, she would still have justice."

The unfortunate woman's answer was a loud burst of laughter!

Well *she* knew the *justice* of the new head of Christ's Church; well, and unerringly did she anticipate the kind of mercy she should receive of the royal ruffian, in whose gripe, her own vanity and blind ambition had placed her. Poor soul, it little availed—before "the commission of Lords" appointed to condemn her—to exclaim "O! Father, O! Creator, thou knowest I do not deserve this death!" but with that Creator and Father who heard and judged that agonised appeal, it, if sincere, must have availed her much; and amidst the angelic cohorts looking down with pitying eyes upon a scene that might well make angels weep, there was not one whose intercession for her was more earnest than that of the sainted lady whose crown she had usurped—whose prematurely-grey hairs she had helped to bring with sorrow to the grave!

Condemned to death by the servile peers, Anne, on the 19th of May, 1536, was led to the scaffold and beheaded. On

¹ The natural, and, indeed, in many respects justifiable prejudice of catholic writers against Anne Boleyn, has induced them to listen with ready ear to the accusation which was the ostensible cause of the judgment to die recorded against her by the base parasites of the king. A diligent perusal—a patient consideration of the evidence which has come down to us, has convinced me that of the crimes of adultery and incest Anne was entirely innocent. Levity, indeed, may be justly laid to her charge; but of unfaithfulness to the king she certainly was not guilty. The "confessions," such as they are, which were elicited in the silence and secrecy of dungeons, and by the arts and instruments common to such places, from her pretended accomplices, are not entitled to a moment's consideration. Dr. Lingard evidently doubts her guilt.

the day of the execution the king dressed himself in white ; and the next morning he married Jane Seymour.

Stay ! Before this new bridal can be celebrated, or the funeral baked meats furnish forth the marriage tables, the aid of the Most Reverend Father in God Archbishop Cranmer is required. The king demands of his faithful and pious servant that he shall, by virtue of his judicial and pastoral authority, not only annul the marriage with the Lady Anne, but declare, judicially and pastorally, that it *always had been* null and void !!

Hard task !—hard terms ! but Cranmer—meek, complying saint—humbly kissed the rod. He forthwith cited the imprisoned queen and the lustful monarch before his court, in order “that for the safety of their souls” the objections to the validity of the marriage should be solemnly discussed !” This hideous mockery gone through, the first protestant archbishop, on the 17th of May, two days after the king’s valets, miscalled peers, had adjudged Anne to die, he, “having previously invoked the name of Christ, and having God alone before his eyes,” by virtue of his judicial and pastoral office, decreed that the marriage formerly contracted and solemnized between Henry and Anne “was, and *always had been*, null and void.”

Three years had scarcely passed since Cranmer, by virtue of the same power, declared that Henry and Anne “were and had been joined in lawful matrimony !” However high the wages paid by the devil, his service, it must be confessed, is hard withal. This protestant archbishop makes one blush for one’s kind.

Jane Seymour, the king’s third wife, happily for herself, died in giving birth to a son, afterwards Edward the 6th. Two years had passed, when, on the recommendation of his Vicar-General, Cromwell, Henry married Anne, sister of the reigning Duke of Cleves. He was soon disgusted with her person : she had no beauties that, to use his own expression, could “nourish love.” About six months after marriage, his obedient peers and clergy obliged him with a divorce ; and he was once

more a free bachelor. A month had scarcely glided by before he married Catharine Howard, niece to the Duke of Norfolk. She was said to have won the heart of the king "by her easy and graceful manners, and a notable appearance of honour, cleanness, and maidenly behaviour." This young lady was much distrusted and disliked by the reformers. A rigorous scrutiny into her life resulted in a colourable charge of incontinency previous to her marriage with the king. Cranmer urged the accusation with much industry and skill; a bill of attainder, delivering her to death—no defence permitted—was passed by the obsequious parliament; and on the 13th of February, 1542, she was murdered on the scaffold. Henry's sixth and last wife, Catharine Parr, survived him.

The king was quite as jealous of his new title of supreme head of Christ's universal Church in England as of the honour of his bed. Whoever presumed to question his spiritual infallibility was inexorably doomed to the scaffold or the stake. This blasphemous usurpation was cemented by some of the best blood of England. The excellent and courageous Bishop Fisher, and the learned, the amiable, the pious Sir Thomas More, formerly Lord High Chancellor, were judicially murdered for declining to recognise the king's spiritual supremacy. Both died with a cheerful constancy. When More was informed that the king, as an especial favour, had commuted his punishment to decapitation—"God," cried he, "preserve all my friends from such *favours*." The heads of Fisher and More were exposed on London Bridge. Previous to and after the execution of these distinguished men, a great number of lesser note, both clergy and laity, suffered death for the same *crime*. The priors of London, Aixholm, and Belleval merely waited on Cromwell, the Vicar-General, to *explain* their conscientious objections to the oath of supremacy. This was enough for that zealous servant of the king. He caused them to be forthwith indicted for high treason, and, by dint of furious menaces, succeeded, though with much difficulty, in extorting

a verdict of guilty from a reluctant jury. They were hanged, drawn, and quartered.

The sudden outburst of heavenly light which distinguished this dawn of a bright era was as bewildering as brilliant. Excess of new light proved more fatal than the old darkness. The clause already noticed—contained in the 34th Henry the 8th, c. I.—which extended the pains of heresy “to all persons who should teach or maintain any opinion contrary to such doctrines as the *king might afterwards publish*,” was a dazzling flash of wisdom, which blinded hundreds to the ruin they were unconsciously incurring. In 1530 the king forbade the publication of Tyndal’s Bible, which, it was alleged, was full of errors. Five poor wretches were consigned to the flames for presuming to read it. Cranmer and his holy colleagues also sent to the stake one John Frith for asserting that it was not necessary to salvation to believe or deny the dogma of the real presence, and Hewet, a tailor, who had determined to believe and speak, and to live and die with John Frith. The archbishop and his colleagues also burnt Lambert, a priest and schoolmaster, for presuming to deny the real presence. A shoal of Anabaptists and other German heretics were burnt in 1535. Three years afterwards more arrived. Those whom Cranmer could not persuade to recant he sent to the stake. But I am weary of dwelling on these horrors, and shall finish the bloody catalogue with the mention of two or three of the more prominent *miscellaneous* murders perpetrated by the first Protestant king and his wretched tools. Cardinal Pole, a faithful and able minister of the ancient church, was honoured with the tyrant’s deadliest hatred: he luckily dwelt abroad, beyond the monster’s reach; but the mother and brothers of the hated cardinal were within his danger. They were arrested, and, after the forms of a mock trial had been gone through, were found guilty of high treason, and executed! Pole’s mother, the Countess of Salisbury, who was upwards of seventy years of age, suffered last. After two years’ imprisonment in the tower, the king ordered her to be put to death. When on

the scaffold, the aged lady refused to lay her head upon the block. "My head," she said, "has never committed treason: if you will have it, you must take it as you can." She was pulled down by the executioner, and held by force, exclaiming, as the headsman performed his office, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness sake." One of the last of Henry's victims was the gallant and accomplished Earl of Surrey, son of the Duke of Norfolk. Both father and son were much disliked by the more eager reformers; but the difficulty was to find or invent a decent pretext for putting them to death. It was finally determined to charge them with high treason—the son for having quartered on his shield the arms of Edward the Confessor; the father for having been privy to his son's assumption of arms awarded him by the College of Heralds, and hereditary in his family!! A jury was empannelled and commanded to convict the earl: they did so; and on the 13th of January, 1537, he was executed. But the death of the Earl of Surrey was not the principal aim of the reforming conspirators: they coveted the Norfolk estate; and it was, therefore, necessary the duke should perish.¹ A bill of attainder was urged through parliament—Cranmer, as appears by the journals of the House of Peers, steadily voting for it. The dying Henry's assent was given by commission, and orders were despatched to the lieutenant of the Tower to execute his prisoner early the next morning. Before that morning's sun arose the soul of Henry had been required of him, and had fled, stained, spotted, reeking with the blood of the excellent of the earth, to the tribunal of eternal, irrevocable doom! The execution was suspended; and in Mary's reign the attainder was reversed.

¹ The Earl of Hertford was to get £666 13s. 4d. per annum; Sir Thomas Seymour £300; Sir William Herbert £266 13s. 4d.; the Lords Lisle, St. John, Russell, and Sir Anthony Denny, £200 each; and the Lord Wriothesly £100. They were all dissatisfied with the small amount of these grants.—Burnet 2. 6. out of the council book. The amount Cranmer was to receive does not appear in this list.

CHAPTER IV.

Henry had not only slain, but taken possession. The edifices with which, in the course of ages of faith *and* works, England was gradually studded; where penitent guilt retired to pray and weep; in which the wearied spirit and the breaking heart found rest, and hope, and peace; at whose doors calamity, sorrow, misery, never knocked in vain, nor departed without that balm for hurt minds which Christian charity, administered by sympathising hearts, can alone render; all these, the legacies of a brave and pious ancestry, the tyrant and his myrmidons violated, plundered, razed! The abodes sacred to faith, and hope, and charity, became the lairs of robbers. The number of monasteries suppressed *from first to last* was 643, together with 90 colleges, 2,374 chantries, 3 chapels, and 110 hospitals!!! All became the spoil of a ravenous aristocracy. These asylums for penitence, suffering, and destitution, result naturally from the religion which especially teaches, as the Saviour especially taught, that he who succours the helpless and feeds the hungry shall have everlasting life; and that he who neglects those high and solemn duties, or with haughty scorn and contemptuous indifference flings alms to a fellow mortal, as offal to a dog, shall suffer the second and eternal death! It is not whilst life is lusty and the hot blood dances joyously along the throbbing veins, that such teaching is often heard or felt:—

“The sun is in the heavens,
And the proud day, attended by the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton and too full of gauds to give it audience.”

But when the evening of life is closing in, and the shadows of the coming night steal gradually over the receding earth, then does the divine injunction, invisible amidst the glare of glowing life and worldly prosperity, shine out in fiery distinctness; and the humility of death atones to suffering humanity for the pride and selfishness of life. The reformers are wise in their generation. The iron ligatures of modern legislation restrain even the dying from deviating into earnest charity.

Thomas Cromwell, the new Vicar-General, whose counsel had emboldened the king to usurp the spiritual supremacy, with consistent villainy urged that that assumption placed the wealth of the clerical and monastic bodies at the disposal of the new head of the Church. He, therefore, proposed that the king should enrich himself and his friends by the plunder, to begin with, of the lesser monasteries, in number three hundred and eighty, and possessing a yearly income of thirty two thousand pounds, besides treasure worth at least one hundred thousand more. This was too tempting a bait to be declined: Cranmer added his pious counsels to those of his friend, and a "visitation" to the doomed establishments, by Cromwell and others, was at once commanded, in order, as was said, to *ascertain* whether the *abuses* alleged to be practised in the lesser monasteries would warrant the transfer of the property belonging to them, to the king, the "visitors," and sundry other noblemen, who all vehemently coveted its possession.

Does any sane person imagine that either holy Cranmer or pious Henry, when bidding Cromwell God speed as he departed upon his visitation, had any doubt of the nature of the "report" the visitor would make? If either of them had, he must have believed the Vicar-General had studied Machiavelli—whose disciple he had professed himself—to very little purpose. There was no danger of mistake. A statement—very probably arranged before he departed on his mission—was laid by Cromwell before parliament, which, while it allotted the praise of regularity to the greater monasteries, described the less opulent "as abandoned to sloth and immo-

rality." Of course. A bill was introduced and speedily passed (March, 1536), by which parliament—dishonoured name!—made a present to the king and his heirs of all monastic establishments under the value of two hundred pounds yearly income. It was soon carried into effect by Cromwell, the ruffian of the reformation, as Dr. Johnson calls him. (Why Cromwell should *monopolize* a title to which the king and Cranmer possess equally strong claims, it is hard to conceive.) The establishments were broken up, the houses were pillaged; the mass of the monks were absolved from their vows (by the head of the Church or his Vicar-General—it little matters which), and sent adrift into the world without any provision for their support. To the nuns the "ruffian" vouchsafed one gown each; with which bountiful alms they were dismissed, to beg, steal, or starve, as fortune, taste, or necessity might decide. This was, indeed, a godly business! Who can doubt that the blessing of Providence must remain throughout all time upon a work, the foundations of which were thus laid in mercy, peace, and holiness!!

But it may be asked, where were the people of England during the perpetration of these atrocities? Alas, for the people! Unarmed, undisciplined, what could they effect against the organised and confederate powers of the king and nobles? Yet they did not tamely submit, nor surrender the inheritance of centuries without a desperate and sanguinary struggle. By the beginning of October, 1536, all the northern counties, from the borders of Scotland to the Humber and the Lune, were in insurrection. They demanded a general redress of grievances; the *restitution* of the Church; that evil and heretical men should be banished from the king's councils; and that a *free* parliament should be immediately convened either at York or Nottingham. Their enthusiasm, kindled at the sight of the ruins of establishments they had been accustomed from their cradle to revere—of nuns and monks, houseless, homeless, beggared—was unbounded. Their numbers, to which each day brought fresh accessions, were immense. The Dukes

of Suffolk and Norfolk were hastily despatched, with formidable forces, to check, if possible, the rebellion in its bud; and the king summoned his barons to meet him in arms at Northampton. The men of Lincolnshire were first in the field. They were opposed by the Duke of Suffolk; but so formidable did they appear to the royal general, that he dared not risk an action, preferring the safer course of negotiation. An armistice was proposed, and, unfortunately, agreed to. Protracted and fruitless discussions followed; dissension soon appeared in the camp of the insurgents; and the more eager and fiery spirits amongst them having left to join their brethren in Yorkshire, the rest accepted a full pardon, and retired to their homes.

The men of the other counties were more successful, because more prompt and decisive. They marched rapidly upon Hull, York, and Pontefract, of which they took possession; restoring, in their march, the monks to the monasteries from which they had been expelled. The castles of Skipton and Scarborough, numerous garrisons, resisted their efforts; but thirty thousand men, under Robert Aske, hastened to seize Doncaster. The Earl of Shrewsbury threw himself into the town, and was speedily reinforced by the Duke of Norfolk at the head of five thousand troops. Cannon commanded the bridge and the river, and the ford was rendered impassable by a sudden rising of the waters. Under these circumstances, the insurgents consented to an armistice, and appointed deputies to lay their demands before the king. To the deputies Henry returned a characteristic answer in his own hand. Their demands were refused, but a full pardon was offered to all except ten persons. The king's offers were spurned, and the insurgents, concentrating their forces, prepared for battle; but Norfolk, a man of undoubted resolution and ability, dreading the issue of an attack, appealed so successfully to the fears of the king, as to induce him to offer an unrestricted and unconditional pardon, *and to pledge his royal word that a free parliament should be immediately assembled at York.* Confiding in the king's word, the insurgents returned to their homes. Two months passed by;

Henry's promise remained unfulfilled ; and finding themselves duped, they again flew to arms. They were all too late. The time which the king had obtained by fraud and guile had been diligently employed. Norfolk's army had been greatly strengthened. The "rebels" failed in two attempts to surprise Hull and Carlisle ; most of the leading men were taken, sent to London, and executed ; and the common file were hanged by hundreds at York, Hull, and Carlisle. The flame which had burst forth from the smoking ruins of the people's church was quenched in that people's blood. Yes, Englishmen, our brave and guileless ancestors were *trampled* into submission to the new order of things by military violence, aided by deceit and fraud. The stern teachers that reclaimed them from the "errors" of the old faith were the axe, the gibbet, and the dungeon !

The appetite for plunder is ever increased by indulgence. The larger abbeys and monasteries, which a brief space before had been awarded the praise of "regularity," were the next sacrifice to the Moloch of the reformation. Excuses were not wanting ; and indeed so cogent was the reasoning, so significant were the hints of the king's commissioners, that before the termination of the "inquiry," many superiors, anticipating with marvellous sagacity the "verdict" that would be rendered, and desirous of sparing the king's ruffians (I *must* use the plural) a useless expenditure of time and trouble, abandoned their trust-properties to the royal *discretion*. These were wise and prudent men. Others, less skilful in interpreting the signs of the times, were sent to dungeons, during the king's pleasure, to learn wisdom ; whilst perversely-obstinate men, such as the abbots of Colchester, Reading, and Glastonbury, who rebelliously persisted in calling robbery, robbery—sacrilege, sacrilege, after the manner of the old vocabulary, had their unruly tongues silenced by the sharp axe of the executioner. Death on the scaffold was mercy itself when compared with the sufferings of those sentenced to imprisonment. The fate of the Carthusians who perished in Newgate of hunger and disease, was that of hun-

dreds of others. It is thus set forth in a letter addressed to Cromwell by Bedyl, one of the "visitors:"—"My very good lord, after my most hearty commendations. It shall please your lordship to understand that the monks of the charter-house here at London, committed to Newgate for their treacherous behaviour committed against the king's grace, be almost despatched by the hand of God, as it may appear to you by the bills enclosed. Wherefore, considering their behaviour, and the whole matter, I am not sorry, but would that all such as love not the king's highness and his worldly honour were in like case. There be departed Greenwood, Davye, Salter, Peerson, Greene. There be at the point of death Scriven, Reading. There lie sick Johnson, Horne. One is whole, Bird."¹

These were the righteous means by which that immortal triumvirate of saints and heroes, Henry, Cranmer, and Cromwell, sought to establish the new religion, and efface all traces of the old. Not only were the homes of refuge for palsied age and stricken youth destroyed or converted into gaols and dog-houses, but shrines were plundered;² the tombs of the great

¹ Upwards of fifty Franciscan friars perished by the same means in various prisons. The remainder were banished. Two of the number, Peyto and Elstow, who had denounced the king's conduct to his face, when preaching before him, were told by the Vicar-General that they deserved to be enclosed in a sack and thrown into the Thames. Peyto answered:—"Threaten such things to rich and dainty folk, which are clothed in purple, fare deliciously, and have their chiefest hopes in this world. We esteem them not. We are joyful that for the discharge of our duty we are driven hence. With thanks to God, we know that the way to heaven is as short by water as by land."

² Nothing can more clearly illustrate the mocking spirit in which these sacrilegious robberies were conceived and executed than the trial of Thomas a Becket, some time archbishop of Canterbury. It was resolved that the name of the martyr should not remain on the calendar, lest men by his example should be induced to defy the ecclesiastical supremacy of the sovereign. On the 24th of August, 1538, the Attorney-General filed an information against the dead saint, and formally cited him to appear. Judgment would have gone by default but for the generous consideration of the "king's highness," who graciously assigned him a counsel. On the 11th of June, the court sat at Westminster, and, after lengthened pleadings, judgment was given, that "Thomas a Becket, some time archbishop of Canterbury, had been guilty of rebellion, contumacy, and treason." His bones were ordered to be disinterred and burnt; and the offerings which had been made at his shrine were adjudged to the king. The sentence was executed in due form, and the spoils were conveyed in ponderous coffers to the king's

and good were not only pillaged, but, as if the mute history inscribed upon them upbraided and menaced the sacrilegious spoilers, defaced and destroyed; and England, at the commencement of the year 1540, presented the aspect of a country devastated by a foreign enemy. The plundered property, immensely increased, since then in money-value by the industry and enterprise of the English people, still remains with the descendants of the plunderers, who, heaping wrong upon wrong, whilst their coffers overflow with the produce of the patrimony of the indigent, by means of *protective* laws insolently devolve upon industry the charge of providing for destitution!¹

Thus fell the monastic polity of England, the growth of a thousand years, and which had survived the strife and violence of foreign invasion and domestic war. It was enshrined in the affections of the nation, and, had it depended on it, would have flourished in undiminished wealth and influence to this day. The enthusiastic attachment of an unsophisticated people to establishments, amongst which, they dwelt from infancy to age—the respect and veneration in which they held the inmates, with whose daily life and conversation they were necessarily familiar, must, to a candid mind, afford irrefragable evidence of the falsity of the charges brought against the monks and nuns by those who were hungering for the spoil. Mr. Bates,

treasury. This trial was one of the *jeux d'esprit* with which the great church reformers enlivened the few but dreary intervals of time during which they rested from murder, and robbery. Sacrilegious mockery was at times displayed in a less pleasant manner. Dr. Forest, who had been confessor to Queen Catharine, was burnt at a slow fire, *kindled with the wood of a large cross* brought from Wales to London for the especial purpose. He was suspended by the middle over the flames. Latimer, *one of the shining lights of the reformation*, preached during the agony. Dr. Forest's crime was denying Henry's spiritual supremacy.

¹ There was a large plunder. Sir J. Sinclair says—"The real value of the possessions was inconceivably great. It appears from an account drawn up in the year 1717, that the annual amount of the suppressed houses amounted to £273,000 per annum, and at a very moderate calculation would now yield six millions. The Abbey of St. Alban's, valued at £2,500 per annum, possessed states which, a century after the suppression, brought in £200,000 per annum." In other words, the lands and other property torn, three hundred years ago, from the "easy landlords," the monks, and now enjoyed by a keen aristocracy, would have sufficed for the effectual relief of the enormous pauperism of this enlightened nineteenth century.

indeed, in his Rural Philosophy, suggests that what he is pleased to call "the easy indulgence, and indiscriminate hospitality of the monks, operating as premiums to idleness, are fairly pleadable in abatement of that exorbitant regard in which, the religious orders were held in former ages." Easy indulgence and indiscriminate hospitality, are certainly not *modern* errors, and "exorbitant regard" for the ministers of religion is a vice or a virtue unquestionably passed away; but that man must possess a very slight and superficial acquaintance with the springs of human action who can believe that the exercise of hospitality *which might not be denied* (old English hospitality was not a bestowal of *alms*, in the modern meaning of the word: the indigent and the wayfarer had a *right* to relief and shelter) could have *bribed a nation* to be silent, with respect to the "infamous vices" charged upon monks and nuns by the visitors, or that the *religious* enthusiasm of a whole people could be aroused in behalf of *vicious* communities;—that people marching to do battle against the crown and the nobility, with the emblems of their faith, Christ crucified, and the host and chalice, emblazoned on their banners! They *felt* that the English monastic system was admirably adapted for the purposes for which it was designed—the worship of God and the service of man; that it was, with inconsiderable exceptions, as purely administered as wisely instituted; and so feeling, they rose simultaneously in its defence. To rebut the monstrous calumnies of Cromwell and his ruffian crew, susceptible from their very nature of no other reply, the monks *called witnesses to character*. The call was answered by the people of England, amongst whom they had for ages dwelt, ministered, lived, and died. There needs no other defence.¹

¹ "There is one fact which to me appears decisive on the subject. Of all the monastic bodies, perhaps the monks of Christchurch have suffered the most in reputation: they were charged with habitually indulging in the most immoral and shameful propensities. Yet when Archbishop Cranmer named the clergy for the service of his cathedral, he selected from these very men no fewer than eight prebendaries, ten minor canons, and two choristers."—Dr. Lingard. *History of England*, vol. VI., p. 267.

There is nothing that excites the ire of a modern political economist so much as praise, however slight and guarded, of monastic establishments, considered as places of refuge and solace for the poor. His scorn of such old-world, childish notions is supreme, unbounded. The system is directly opposed to his own infallible specific for all social ills, which consists in practical, *unmistakeable* demonstration to the working classes that nobody of the idle classes cares, or ever will care, one straw about them. To act otherwise is, he teaches, to foster *improvidence*.¹ True aid to the helpless man consists in bidding him help himself. The domestic virtues of frugality, economy, chastity can only be nourished by the exceedingly "useful information for the people" contained in the quarter-ounce dietary tables of modern poor-houses. That this is the *rationale* of the blessed philosophy with which the sages of Scotland (that pattern land, in which poor-laws are esteemed an abomination, and where, in tenderness to the delicate susceptibilities of the rich, coroners' inquests are forbidden) have, with much wordy effort, inoculated the English mind, few will be bold enough to deny. No wonder that such men should condemn and hate the polity of "merrie" England. But the *philosophers* do not impose *on themselves*. A list of those amongst them that are applicants for the admission of relatives and friends to the Charter-house or any other of the few "foundations" still left us, would be instructive and significant. However much the sounding nothings which they remorselessly retail may amuse and blind the million, the priests of the oracle pay marvellously little attention to its mouthings or mutterings.

Those who estimate the value to the industrial classes of a wisely-administered hospitable polity by the amount of direct

¹ One of the great lights of this school, and, certainly, a splendid talking-machine, objects, it is said, *on principle*, to such an institution as Bartholomew's Hospital, London, for the very philosophic reason that such establishments render men less careful of their limbs and lives than they would be if no place for cheap amputations and cures existed!!

relief afforded to the needy, err miserably. The monastic establishments were places where *unhumiliated* labour could shelter itself till capital, weary of wasting inactivity, was content to purchase health and vigour at an equitable price. That they did not aid much to increase the sum total of the national wealth, may be admitted; but they were admirable conduits for insuring its equitable *distribution*. Say, that the monastic polity would ultimately, if unchecked by violence or fraud, have transferred a vast portion of the land and other fixed property to trustees for the indigent; would *that* be really so great an evil as we are taught to believe by persons, many of whom also maintain that the land of England must necessarily be thrown out of cultivation were not its produce so artificially enhanced in price as to be able to provide for the splendour of coronets, the luxuries of grouse-shooting, and opera-boxes? They, indeed, may believe so; as so, doubtless, do those worthy persons who insist that the "balance of the constitution," whatever that may mean, would be in imminent danger if the Duke of Beaufort were compelled to dine off delf, or Lord John Russell reduced to the sad necessity of eating his dinner with a steel fork; but that any reflecting man, unbiassed and unblinded by interest or thick prejudice, can really think so, is scarcely credible.

The rewards of labour must necessarily be regulated by the amount of the fund out of which wages are paid: that is to say, there can be no more distributed amongst the industrious classes than there is to distribute. What then constitutes the labour-fund? Certainly not money, which is merely the medium of exchange—a sign of value. There is not enough coined money and bank paper in all England to pay the wages of England for four months. The fund with which labour is paid, consists only of those articles which labourers consume. In Ireland the wage-fund is potatoes and old clothes. In England, as yet at least, it is composed of a sufficiently scanty portion of meat, bread, potatoes, and somewhat more decent apparel. It is obvious then, that the richer the labour-fund is in these articles,

the more there will be to distribute. All the activity, all the trade in the world, will not give the industrious classes, a meal, or a garment the more, unless that activity and that trade increase the amount of food and clothing existing in the country. The people of Ireland may be incessantly at work from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, but they will never dine off pork, as long as the Irish pigs are all sent to Liverpool and Bristol. Those who prate of prosperity as exhibited by the exports and imports of a country, without keeping this principle in view, babble to little purpose. The question which concerns the people is not so much the *amount* of imports, as the *nature* of the imports. It is clear then that as much meat, bread, potatoes, and clothing as possible, should be not only raised and made at home, but consumed at home. It is equally clear that that as much as possible of those good things—the only good things which can fall to the lot of the labourer—should be brought into the country, in exchange for the exports, or goods sent out of it; and it must be borne in mind, that only such goods will be imported as the owners of the exported goods require. Of the fifty millions of English exports, how much is returned in articles which the industrious classes consume? A vast amount of exports is paid for in jewellery, spices, perfumes, cashmere shawls, rich wines, plate, watches, silks, paintings, marbles, statues, singing men and dancing women, and many other luxuries; none of which, it is manifest, can be distributed as *wages*. Nobody can blame the propertied classes, for sending abroad the surplus products of the country, for such articles as they stand in need of. It is natural that they should do so; but, if a large portion of the soil and other fixed property were held in trust, by persons compelled to reside in certain places at home, and to wear coarse gowns, there can be no question that they would not be able to dispense the “surplus produce” of industry, in articles which they could not use, wear, or enjoy. What would a Sister of Mercy do with a cashmere shawl, or a Monk with an opera box? Say, that the monks love good cheer; still they would be puzzled

to eat or drink any great portion of the land's produce! A fat abbot and six or seven fatter monks, holding five or six thousand good acres in trust, would be sadly put to it to consume the produce of a hundred; whilst a duke or earl, located, by virtue of the great reformation, on a monk's trust, what with his horses, hounds, tours on the continent, statues, pictures, opera boxes, and opera girls, could easily dispose of thrice such a revenue. No wonder that "indiscriminate hospitality," Mr. Bates' aversion, should have distinguished the old time. What *could* the monks do with the beef and the corn, the pork and the poultry, the cheese and the clotted cream—but give them away. No marvel England was "merrie" England then—

"In the world's pool a swan's nest,"

as Shakspeare testifies. Of what *but* a "merrie" land could such a sentence have been written?

We sometimes hear fierce indignation expressed at the enormous wickedness of quartering some hundreds of "lazy" monks upon the industry of a nation—albeit the said monks subsisted upon *bequeathed* property. How many thousand "lazy" men and women are *now* quartered upon the industry of England?—how many "idlers" are maintained in splendour at home?—how many abroad, in France, Belgium, Italy? To how many absentee "idlers" do the Irish producers send the corn, beef, mutton, and pork of Ireland? The truth is, that our reforming *illuminati*, mock this diabolically plundered nation.

Which proprietary, people of England, are, think ye, the most effective in enriching the wage fund—the monks or the lords?

Let me seriously, solemnly ask you, people of England, how, but for the operation of the causes I have indicated, could it be that you, the most industrious, the most skilful, the most enterprising people on the face of the earth—possessing advantages in coal and iron mines which render competition with you hopeless—unmolested, during eight centuries, by foreign in-

vaders—living under the freest constitution in the world ; how is it, I say, that the physical and moral condition of millions amongst you is inferior—far inferior to that of the populations of Belgium, France, Austria, Tuscany ?—countries whose industry, compared with yours, is idleness itself ; countries which have been over and over again, within our own recollection, devastated by war. The *aggregate* wealth of England has immensely increased, and is increasing much faster than are the numbers of the population. The rich daily become richer ; the poor poorer. The machine power of the country creates enormous real and exchangeable wealth ; and yet, amidst all this countless abundance, these prodigious means of happiness, you are worn with incessant labour and carking care, and the very infancy of your little ones is saddened and harassed by premature and wasting toil ! What share have you in the glittering vanities which constitute the unceasing boast of this age of progress, as it is foolishly and falsely called ? Unrequited and uncared for, you pass through weary life to hopeless death—the wonder, the admiration, the pity of all that have eyes to see beneath the glittering crust of a corrupt civilization ! And thus, good friends, will it ever be, until you determine to regain the ancient ways, and to build up anew your social edifice upon the old foundations.

The reformation was now *essentially* complete. His work accomplished, the first Protestant king, and first head of the Church, departed the scene of his labours on the 28th of January, 1547.

Yet was not the life of this king *all* evil. One act of justice gleams brightly out of the thick darkness of his lamentable reign : he sent his Vicar-General, Cromwell, to the scaffold. He had raised him from obscurity to the highest dignity ; he seemed to monopolize the favour of the monarch till the very moment of his fall ; the title of Earl of Essex had been conferred upon him ; and he had at various times obtained grants of thirty manors belonging to suppressed monasteries. His last official act was to pass a bill through parliament vesting

the property of the knights hospitallers in the king. It was at this moment of full-blown pride that the "great axe" fell upon and destroyed him. He was suddenly accused of high treason, of course condemned, and, spite of the most abject entreaties to his "gracious master" to spare his worthless life, executed. Treason against religion, justice, freedom, humanity, he had, indeed, a hundred times committed; his hands were reeking with the innocent blood he had helped to shed; but treason against the king, Cromwell had never contemplated. Henry *willed* the destruction of his Vicar-General, because he had entrapped him into a distasteful marriage with a woman who had no charms "to nourish love"—Anne of Cleves; and the king's *will* was, of course, sufficient warrant for inflicting death.

It was Cromwell who advised the king to assume the supremacy; Cromwell who suggested the expedient of condemning obnoxious persons to the scaffold by *bills of attainder* unsupported by evidence; Cromwell who persuaded Henry to enrich himself and his parasites by the plunder of temple, shrine, and tomb. At last, slow-footed but iron-handed justice overtook him, and he drank deep of the poisoned chalice he had remorselessly mixed for others. He perished at the command of a despot whom he had helped to despotic power; the *mode* by which his destruction was effected was of his own contrivance—attainder without trial; and his *share* of the plunder of church, shrine, and tomb invited ruin by the largeness of the spoil to be distributed at his death. His intimate acquaintance, Archbishop Cranmer, the guide, philosopher, and friend with whom he had so often held sweet and profitable counsel—who had so frequently sat in judgment with him when blasphemous wretches who dared to question the king's infallibility were ruthlessly consigned to the stake or the gibbet by their concurrent voices—he, at least, would be,

"Among the faithless, faithful found,"

in this his dear friend's mortal peril! He did *not* abandon him *immediately*. On the 14th of June, 1540, the first Protestant

archbishop wrote, on behalf of the first Protestant vicar-general, an humble letter to the first Protestant king. This showed valour ; but discretion, which is, it is said, the better part of that heroic virtue, came to brave Cranmer's rescue ; and only five days later—oh, sorrow ! and oh, shame !—the holy man attended in his place in parliament, and voted steadily in favour of the bill which consigned his “ friend ” and brother counsellor to the scaffold !!

Cranmer himself survived Henry's reign of terror to perish miserably in Mary's time by the justest stroke,

“ That ever the destroyer yet destroyed.”

He was a man, if man he may be called, compounded of servility, cruelty, fanaticism and cowardice. A consecrated priest, he unblushingly violated his oath of celibacy by marrying a German woman, who, with her children, he kept carefully concealed till Henry's death ; at the same time enforcing by imprisonment and the gibbet, the celibacy of other priests. A disbeliever in the sacramental presence, he unhesitatingly consigned to the stake those bolder spirits who proclaimed his own secret belief. Consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, he prostituted his high office without scruple or remorse, to gratify the sensual and vindictive passions of the king. In the succeeding reign, that of Edward the 6th, he proceeded recklessly in the glorious work of plunder and assassination. The few remaining chantries, shrines, which had escaped the general wreck were pillaged. He helped to re-reform the Anglican creed, and adjudged to death all who refused concurrence in his and the boy-king's theology. Anne Bocker he burnt, contrary to the advice of the monarch, and, finally, helped to compile the infamous and bloody code against heretics, that in the succeeding reign was sanctioned by Mary's parliament, and by virtue of which infamous, diabolical statute, that queen sent him, its author, to the stake. He was loth to die ; the man had no faith, no convictions, no principle. He recanted again and again ; offered to say or sign anything to save his life ; till at

last, when all hope of being able to avoid the flames by any the vilest self-degradation had passed away, like the scorpion girt with fire, his reckless desperation assumed the appearance of courageous contempt of death, as with the resolution of despair he endured the fiery agony to which he had so often condemned the gentle, the pious, the sincere.

Such, Englishmen, were the heroes and saints that illustrated the first great days of the reformation, at whose birth, it has been made abundantly evident, lust, robbery, and murder, were the attendant ministering spirits. Could it be with such instruments that God would establish or reform HIS Church !

The child's the father of the man, in a national as in an individual sense. Henry's doings were "pictures in little" of the more widely-developed enormities of his daughter Elizabeth. The reformation, as I have before remarked, was essentially completed by Henry. The key-stone of the arch removed, its entire fall is merely a question of time. The right to determine the creed of a nation once invested in the crown or in parliament, change, confusion, blasphemies various and manifold, follow necessarily ; I shall, therefore, *very* briefly sketch the mode by which Christianity, filtered through the brains of knave, enthusiast, infidel, and fool, became "fine by degrees, and beautifully less," till super-refined by the Dutch hero of Glencoe, it was declared the only genuine, unadulterated religion, with which God or parliament had ever blessed a sinful world.

Edward the 6th, with the aid of Cranmer and others, pillaged the few remaining houses of hospitality, chantries, and guilds ; dividing the spoil amongst his favourites. Refractory preachers were silenced, and the axe and gibbet did their work with nonconformists. The pitiless king sent his uncle Somerset to the scaffold upon a charge of treason, unsustained by the slightest credible evidence. This worthy young gentleman is usually esteemed by orthodox Anglicans—the *saint* of the reformation.

Mary succeeded him. She was borne to the throne upon the

shoulders of the people, who, sickened and disgusted by the bloodshed and sacrilege of the preceding reigns, hoping to regain tranquillity, and be again able, guarded by Mary's sceptre, to journey along the old and peaceful paths to the grave, trampled down the efforts of the Duke of Northumberland to elevate his niece, Lady Jane Grey, to the throne. They were, unhappily, deceived. Mary, a sincere believer, but of weak political judgment, instead of insisting upon the restoration of the trust-property scattered amongst the aristocracy to its legitimate uses, and trusting to the old influences to bring back the erring to the one true fold, compromised with the plunderers, and allowed them to retain their booty on condition of their consenting to reconcile themselves to Rome, and repeal all laws enacted against the primitive faith. To these terms they gladly consented. They would have knelt to Beelzebub for half the money. The proud nobles and gentry, in fulfilment of their bargain, assembled, at the queen's command, on the 20th of November, 1554, in the House of Peers, and knelt down to receive the pope's absolution, of which Cardinal Pole was the bearer; all of them audibly responding AMEN. Having screened the robbers, Mary, in her blind zeal for the advancement of religion, commenced a grievous persecution of erring, blind, obstinate, but, doubtless, sincere persons, a considerable number of whom she sent to the stake. Kindness, expostulation, forbearance might have reclaimed, or silent contempt have withered them into their original insignificance; whereas the flames she kindled shed a false glory on the many-coloured creed of folly for which they suffered, which has pierced with deadly glare even to our own time, and by its distorting light the people of England have been carefully persuaded, and are, indeed, thoroughly accustomed to read and interpret the precepts and practice of the Christ-founded Church. Unhappy Mary! In her zeal for what she felt to be the truth, how sadly did she mistake her way! The sad excuse is, that she was educated amidst the horrors of her father and brother's reigns, and all sense of pity and of justice was, consequently, blunted by

"custom of fell deeds." It is doing bare justice to Mary to add that her cruelties have been scandalously exaggerated by that type of lying martyr-mongers, John Foxe. Not more than twenty persons, at the most, suffered capitally. In comparison with her father, brother, and sister, Mary was an angel of mercy.

Queen Mary died of grief, of disappointment, and disgust. She was succeeded by Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn and Henry the 8th. Her's was, indeed, a long and wary reign of persecution, terror, and blood. Where one had been sacrificed by Mary, hundreds fell victims to this woman's caprice, and those not innovators—not persons seeking to undermine a time-honoured faith, but peaceable, quiet folk, who only asked permission to die in the faith in which they had been born and reared. It was death to teach the ancient Christain faith, death to harbour a priest, death to refuse to acknowledge Elizabeth's supremacy. The gaols of England were crowded with the victims of her cruel laws: hundreds perished, not indeed by fire, she was too wary for that, but by the axe and the gibbet, the ripping up of bellies, by famine in dungeons, by compelled beggary; in short, by every kind of persecution iniquitous man has ever devised. Many thousands saved their lives by fleeing the country. Mr. Hallam, a Protestant, the author of the "Constitutional History of England," thus speaks of the dreadful policy of this reign:—"It established a persecution which fell not at all short in principle of that for which the inquisition had become so odious. Nor were the statutes merely designed for terror's sake, to keep a check on the disaffected, as some would pretend. They were executed in the most sweeping and indiscriminate manner, unless, perhaps, a few families of high rank might enjoy a connivance." There was one crime committed by Elizabeth which eclipses all the others in utterly excuseless ferocity—that of the murder of her cousin, the beautiful and persecuted Mary, Queen of Scots, and the true heir to the English crown. Mary, in the unsuspecting confidence of womanhood and near relationship, claimed, when flying from her rebellious

subjects, the *promised* hospitality of Elizabeth. The tiger-hearted woman, after inflicting on her helpless cousin—no subject of hers—the long agony of eighteen years' imprisonment, finally sent her to the block. It is the boast of the Anglican church that its chief glory and distinguishing creed, the thirty-nine articles, date from this female monster's reign!! She was, indeed, a powerful princess, and enjoyed unshared dominion for many years; yet who would purchase such another lease of power at the price of enduring, at its close, the agony of such a death-bed?

I have not ventured to touch upon the horrors acted in *Ireland* during the dominion of Elizabeth and her successors. A true appreciation of the nature of the deeds committed there, in furtherance, as pretended, of the gospel of charity and peace, will only be arrived at when the archangel's trump shall peal forth "*Surgite Mortui*;" awakening the buried world for final judgment. When the graves of Ireland give up their dead, and not till then, will be thoroughly revealed the crimes that peopled them.

James the 1st, a Scotchman, followed Elizabeth. He was a man of narrow intellect, a pedant, and a coward. That he deserved the latter epithet, witness his tame acquiescence in the murder of his mother, Mary, by Elizabeth, he at the time wearing the crown of Scotland! He was also a zealous *reformer*. He was furnished with a notable excuse for persecution by the discovery of a gunpowder plot invented by a few hot-headed fanatics, and which is celebrated to this day by penny crackers and popguns. It is needless to follow the progress of the great schism through the unhappy times of the first Charles, the commonwealth, and Charles the 2nd, the mean pensioner of France.¹ During that dark and

¹ Charles the 2nd did not stand *alone* in his glory. Nearly all the great sponsors of the great revolution of 1688—Lyttleton, Algernon Sydney, Hampden (the great Hampden's grandson), Hollis, Russell, Foley—were the pensioners of Louis the 14th. Lord John Russell suggests that the money was received by those great whigs for the use of the *inferior* plotters of the revolution!!

troubled period, flashed, though it was, here and there, with brilliant lights, the example set by the first reformers was kept steadily in view, and, indeed, often improved upon. Such adepts in reformation were the godly men of the commonwealth, that churches were commonly converted into stables and guardhouses; the troopers pranking themselves out in the clerical vestments. In one place the altar was turned into a meat-block; in another, a horse and calf, wrapped in linen, were baptised at the fonts. Mr. Richard Culmer, a zealous servant of the Lord, dashed out, amidst rabble applause, the splendid imagery of the painted windows of the Canterbury cathedral; and at Arundel some super-reformed soldiers scooped an oven in an altar-tomb! These were, certainly, *improvements* upon some of Henry's doings of a like nature, and conceived in a congenial spirit of mockery of all things consecrated to pious uses.

James the 2nd sought to restore the primitive Church by an illegal straining of the royal prerogative. He failed, and deserved to fail. It is not by Smithfield fires or kingly tyranny that the old faith and happiness can be restored.

William, the Dutch "deliverer," succeeded the dethroned prince. I cannot speak of the transactions of this period without grief and shame. How the brave and high-spirited people of England could be brought to endure the yoke of a cold-blooded and really powerless Dutchman, I cannot understand. Commercial ruin followed national humiliation. The merchant-navy of England was blockaded in the English harbours; all that ventured to sea were captured by the French, who took upwards of fifteen hundred ships, valued at three millions sterling;¹ whilst the valour and treasure of England were wasted in continental struggles to advance Dutch interests. This hero of "immortal memory" stooped to accept a secret bribe of ten thousand pounds from the East India Company for the renewal of their charter! The crowning act of the

¹ Journals of the House of Commons, Nov. 16, 1692.

foreign usurper was the massacre of Glencoe ; an act so atrocious and cowardly, that his most brazen and thorough-going eulogists have made vain but desperate efforts to fasten the dreadful crime—upon his *councillors* ! Sadly, indeed, must the Earl of Winchilsea and his Orange friends be in want of a hero, when they are contented to accept as one such a person as William the 3rd !

Here I close my brief but faithful and unprejudiced account of the chief events of the great schism which commenced at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its continuously-triumphant progress is stamped in fiery characters on the social aspect of England at the present moment: a Rembrandt painting, made up of gloomiest shades, and brilliant, livid lights—magnificent, indistinct, and fearful ; the reflex of a people believing nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing.

I have set down nought in malice. My single aim has been to arouse the minds of my countrymen to earnestly examine for themselves the sad history I have feebly sketched ; and if they do so in an unprejudiced spirit, I am greatly mistaken if they will not rise from its perusal with a clear conviction that there is no hope of peace, safety, true happiness, and real glory, till the old paths, hallowed by faith, bright with hope, glowing with charity, are re-trod in a patient and trusting spirit of kindness and mercy.

The reflections thrown together in the next chapter may, perhaps, aid somewhat the search after truth.

CHAPTER V.

It were mere waste of time to relate the sad story of the reformation, unless with the hope and purpose of deriving wisdom for the future from the experience of the past. I do not write with a view to stir up idle hate, or profitless anger, against artificers of ruin who have long since passed to their account, but to place before my suffering fellow-countrymen, whom I behold running madly to and fro in chase of fantastic shadows, a *tried* means, a sure guide, by which to ultimately regain the old haunts of peace and rest. All other modes and schemes—such as socialism, chartism—are, as I believe, mere shining cheats, breath-bubbles, which must pale and burst the instant they are exposed to the hurtlings of hard reality. The formidable foe of labour is *capital*. Philosophy, in all her showy armoury, has not a weapon with which that foe may be effectually resisted; and thus it happens that capital, which should be labour's animating soul, stirring the else dry bones with quick and genial life, has become its merciless task-master. Capital *was* a ministering spirit of mercy in the old time, and will be so again, when the hospitable policy, so audaciously reformed, shall be restored. Let me earnestly, then, entreat of Englishmen to turn from the vain teaching of a philosophy which tickles the ear, but chills the heart, and ask of religion, if she, with her brighter torch, cannot lead them from out the tangled, thorny maze in which they have so long hopelessly wandered—with clouds and thickest darkness compassed round.

My sceptical countrymen—their name is Legion—will elevate their philosophic brows, and curl their sarcastic lips, at the bare mention of placing the intellect of this marvellous age, under the direction of so old-fashioned, so obsolete a guidance as that of religion. The wits amongst them will, perhaps, inquire with smiling facetiousness, *which* amongst the very numerous religions that exist, have existed, flourished and decayed, I would indicate as the best spiritual Mentor for the “Genius of the Age.” I am familiar with these mocks, for I once dwelt amongst the mockers; such well-remembered and well-worn jests, therefore, fright me the less, and with very slight dread of the sharpest wit, I venture to lay before plain-minded, if strongly-prejudiced Englishmen, the following suggestions for an argument of faith, with the hope that they may, at least, be induced to decide for themselves upon a subject which every smirking dullard that can turn a phrase, or break a jest, has so long presumed to decide for them.

The great, and, to me, irresistible argument for the immortality of the soul, is derived from our knowledge of the moral constitution of man, and our experience of the *benevolence* and power of the Creator, as visible in all created things. If there be not a *continued* existence prepared for man, beyond the present visible sphere, this fair and glorious earth, instead of being the high-purposed work of a beneficent God, is a devil’s caprice and play-thing. What! a God of infinite mercy, of illimitable power, create this wondrous planetary system which clips us round about: give us the sun to light our day, the moon our night; scatter over the earth innumerable proofs of subtlest design; endow man with a soaring and capable spirit; create in him an irrepressible thirst for immortal life; grace his nature with kindly affections and deep sympathies, only forsooth that he should crawl in wonder, doubt, and dread, from the cradle to the grave, and there an end! His soaring spirit lighted up only to be quenched in dusty death; his thirst for immortality bestowed but to mock and befool him; his strong affections and deep sympathies only to be crushed; his knowledge of death, of

good and evil, from which all things animate besides are exempt, not for a warning and a guide, but as a crowning curse! Oh! such omnipotent cruelty would stamp the earth as the creation of an all-powerful demon, instead of that of the all-merciful Deity, which it every where proclaims itself in characters which he who runs may read. I cannot understand that a Theist, can doubt of the immortality of the soul. Were the soul of man *not* immortal, this world was assuredly created without an object worthy the exertion of infinite power, wisdom, and benevolence.

"Well, but," exclaims the philosophic Theist, "admitting the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, how does that bear upon, or strengthen the authority of the religious dogmas, by means of which priests seek to dominate and guide mankind?"

I answer that it is the first link in a chain of logical sequence, conducting necessarily to a belief in the verity of the Christian revelation.

I remember having been much impressed some years ago, by a sounding phrase in one of the books of an infidel writer, I think Mr. Thomas Paine, to this effect:—"If Jesus Christ be the son of God, why is it not so written on the sun, in order that all the world may know and conform to the true worship." This would be the only kind of revelation according to Mr. Paine, that the dignity of common sense, ought to bow down before. The question is scarcely so smart as it is shallow, as I shall proceed to show.

The immortality of man premised, it clearly follows that his present life must be intended as a period of trial, of probation, of *preparation* for that which is to come. If this life had not been intended as a period of trial, of probation, of preparation for another, it would have been made eternal, or would be without an object. If we are not here to prepare ourselves or be prepared for that future life which the soul's immortality assures us, it was an act of absurdity to place us here, with no purpose to fulfil. This proposition appears to me so self-evident, that I cannot doubt but it will be at once admitted.

If, then, the immortal spirit of man be here in a state of trial,

of probation, what are the means by which it may be effectually strengthened, purified, prepared for a higher, a nobler life? The agents that exalt, strengthen, purify, prepare the soul of man, are doubt, struggle, difficulty! These are his great helpers.

Even the mere intellectual nature of man is solely evolved, purified, strengthened by difficulty. The inferior animals, when in health, have their necessary, pre-ordained instincts perfect. They know no progression. The bee builds, the beaver dams, as they did a thousand years ago. It required the exercise and development of human thought through centuries, resulting in the invention of the fluxional calculus, to demonstrate to man that the bee's "ignorant" structure is precisely that only one which most economizes labour, material, and space. The bee knows not his own wondrous structure; but man, progressive man, devoid of instinct, but endowed with reason, and spurred by difficulty, soars, by slow degrees, to an intellectual height from which he looks down in undisputed supremacy over all living things. A camel and a man are standing on the border of a sandy desert. The camel, apparently more cared for by his Maker than his companion, fearlessly enters upon the arid plain, for he is provided with a curiously-contrived stomach, which enables him to traverse the dry waste in safety. The man may not with impunity dare the peril. Years pass away; the difficulty has aroused, evoked the latent energies that lie folded up in man; and his way across the desert is dotted with toil-discovered, toil-secured places of refreshing rest. A few years more, and his inventive powers, triumphing over all obstacles, enable him to pass the once impassible desert with lightning speed, borne forward by man-created wings of steam. The camel is still there with his stomach-springs, and is still the camel of a thousand years before. In tropical climes, where life is easy and food grows spontaneously, the intellectual nature of man generally lies dormant. In his ordinary life there is no spur of sufficient sharpness to prick him into energetic action. It is very different

in the apparently less favoured north. The Dutch, with immense labour and pains, reclaimed their country from the sea, and it still requires much labour and pains to maintain their acquisition undisturbed by the baffled but not vanquished enemy ; still the toilers are vast gainers by the difficulty they have had to contend against. The struggle has called forth, nursed, and matured those habits of patient toil and of indomitable perseverance which so favourably distinguish the Dutch character.

The intellect of man, it is, then, manifest, is evolved and matured by suffering and difficulty. By the same agency, although with infinite difference in the mode of operation, is the soul illumined, chastened, sublimated, prepared for its great destiny.

The physical triumphs attained by man's active intellect, the sole aim of which is, to render earth more convenient or more pleasant, cannot be esteemed a preparation for, or a title to, a future and more blessed existence.

Who will deny, that the fiery trials which the spirit of man passes through, in its yearnings after the infinite, the victorious, but agonizing struggles of staggering faith, with fearful doubt, of trembling hope, with bold despair, of virtuous resolve with strong temptation—fortify, ennoble, exalt, and purify the fighting soul ? Has not that man grown, expanded, as it were, into likeness of the Divinity he serves, who, having with infinite wrestings subdued the tempters within him—pride, lust, self in short, in all its varieties of shape and colour, hastens with holy zeal, regardless of toil, of suffering, or of danger, to bear the lamp of faith to the dark places of the sinful earth ; and at last, his bright course finished, stands exultingly, palm-wreathed and rainbow crowned, upon the blazing pile from which he soars at once to God ? Or he, less tried, less favoured, to whom the confessor's paler crown is alone vouchsafed, who having struggled into trusting faith, after fierce conflicts with bewildering doubt and blinding pride, exhibits the holiness of prayer-achieved faith in works of compassion, of benevolence, of love, to suffering humanity ; is he not purified—worthier of a higher life when he lies down to await the judgment than when he

commenced the fight of which his tomb marks him the final victor ?

How shall the soul of man become etherialized—purged of all earthly dross, fitted for the blissful seats, except by a conflict, a struggle with, and conquest over doubt and sin ? And how could there be chastening, elevating doubt and struggle, if the precise will of God were written in unmistakeable characters on the heavens ? God has *willed* that of all his creatures man alone shall possess no *intuitive* knowledge, but that his spiritual as his intellectual being shall be evoked and disciplined into healthful and beauteous life, by an invigorating, ennobling struggle with difficulty and doubt—the mind's and spirit's helpers.

And what religion, let me ask of sensible Englishmen, so adapted to purify the soul of man, to exercise his faith,¹ to control the evil principle ever at work within him, to cultivate his affections, to subdue his prideful passions, to prepare him for the abodes of peace above, as that of which the Redeemer was the founder, the example, the type, and the fulfilment ? The false religions of the earth appeal to the evil passions of the earth—to love of conquest and domination—to pride of caste ; awaken and strengthen the instincts of cruelty and blood. This alone commands to “suffer and to love.” Testimonies to the efficacy of that divine injunction have been scattered profusely and unceasingly along the course of the ancient church, from the first moment that it shone a sunbeam on the flood of time. Witness its innumerable army of martyrs ; its troops of patient, toiling monks, reclaiming the barren places of

¹ Sir Thomas Browne indulges in some very sounding sentences upon the almost duty of the Catholic, if he knew the chalice to be poisoned, to confirm the reality of his belief by unhesitatingly partaking of it. The great dialectician slips sadly here. Waiving the sufficient answer that it is wine and bread, not *poison*, which the Godhead promised to transubstantiate by a perpetual miracle, it is quite certain that if God *chose* to remove the veils which conceal his presence, and in which, for the exercise of faith, he chooses to shroud his being, he would scarcely await till *forced* to do so by the hand of an assassin. Faith, the evidence of things *not* seen, may scarcely be changed to the evidence of things *seen* ; the entire economy of God's providence be subverted by an intended murder !

the earth from spiritual and physical darkness and dearth; its countless Sisterhood of Mercy—ministering spirits to faith and hope, whom the summons of the still sad music of humanity ever finds with their lamps burning, and in readiness to hasten to cheer the couch of pain and death, of whatever clime or creed may be the sufferer stretched upon it; its organized bands of Brothers of Charity; its asylums for calamity; its palaces for poverty!

I may be, perchance, reminded of the evil and violent deeds committed by evil and violent men in the name of that Church. I lament the partial truth of the charge; but I can perceive no soundness in the inference so often deduced from it. For one person that has suffered injustice from men who dishonoured the faith they professed, how many dying pillows have been smoothed and cheered by the ministrings of faithful priests; how many breaking hearts and wounded spirits bound up and comforted; how many children, perishing and all but lost, restored to bless the lives and deaths of weeping parents; how many miserable hearths have been cheered; how many red-handed, tyrannical oppressors of the humble, humbled and brought low? The spots in the sun must be carefully mapped out and numbered, to be known; but the light and heat of the great luminary require no herald and no chronicler.

The insuperable objection to the *Anglican Church*, its mortal taint is, that it was *conceived* in crime, *born* in crime, *matured* in crime. The Catholic Church was conceived of God, born of holiness, matured in virtue. The edifice of the Anglican Church was reared by apostates and cemented with innocent blood. The Catholic Temple, erected by apostles and martyrs, has, it may be, its excelling brightness here and there faintly *stained* by sin—a tremendous distinction!

The influence of earth-born heathenism is powerless to chasten and purify the human soul. Its highest effort is to exalt the vices of humanity—pride, lust, revenge, cunning—into deities; yet, as the gentle-minded Heber said of one of the seats of Hindoo superstition, “God may have much

people in that city." Far be it from us, poor earth-worms, to presume that all men ignorant of Christ are *necessarily* doomed to the second and eternal death. In the father's house are *many* mansions; and it is surely not for man to set bounds to HIS mercy, or to limit the date and extent of HIS redemption of the world! The parable of the "talents" has a deep, solemn, terrible application; for assuredly of those to whom much is given, much will be required! It is not, however, the less true, that it is only beneath the genial influences of primitive Christianity that the human soul can expand into its full perfection—can flower into those rich blossoms of piety, the fragrance of which, fills the earth thousands of years after the happy spirit by which it was exhaled has passed to bliss.

That England was a much happier country in the middle ages, with not one hundredth part of her present means of happiness, requires not the testimony of the facts with which her history abounds to prove it to the satisfaction of all thinking men; for it was clearly impossible it should be otherwise. The genius of Protestantism breathes disunion, repulsion, discontent; that of Catholicism unity, concord. Wherever a faith which teaches that the soul of the rich man cannot be saved but by the exercise of personal kindness and consideration towards the humbler ranks has fair play, there the well-being of the industrial classes must keep pace with the development of the resources of their country. The condition of the people of England during centuries may be distinctly traced in Shakspeare's *histories*. What a contrast is there presented to the fearful revelations of the painters of modern times!

A priesthood recruited from the ranks of the people; unconnected by marriage with the higher classes; holding their ecclesiastical functions independent of *state* chiefs, must necessarily, as the condition of their existence, become the guardians, the protectors, the *tribunes* of the people. They are the mediators between the rich and the poor; the employer and the employed; capital and labour; having influence and authority with all. They are the golden links which unite the different

and *naturally* diverging classes, in harmonious unity. It was by this system of ecclesiastical polity that England, although frequently suffering from foreign and domestic war, became, hundreds of years before the reforming outbreak, "merrie" England. A genial spirit softened and controlled the harsh workings of advancing civilization. The labourer was not only esteemed worthy of grudging hire, but entitled to personal consideration and kindness. He was treated as a member—an humble one doubtless—but as a member of the great human family; not as a soulless, heartless machine, out of which it is permitted to extract as much labour at as little cost as possible. A precarious social security is only maintained now a-days by constantly-increasing regiments of police; by innumerable disciplinary laws, daily rendered more and more stringent; by model prisons, and the quarter ounce dietary of scientific unions. There is no personal kindness evinced by those that, for the sake of themselves, fling scanty and coarse sustenance to the destitute. A few drops of oil, perhaps, for self's safety—but no good Samaritan to apply it kindly to the angry and festering wound. There are, no doubt, vast sums of money bestowed in England, in the *name* of charity by boards and secretaries; but who has ever felt gratitude towards Brothers or Sisters of Mercy, that distribute their haughty doles through alphabetically arranged apertures in carefully-fastened doors? The people of England are rapidly separating into two classes, the very rich and the very poor: between those classes there is a daily widening gulph, commanded, indeed, by bayonets and cannon; but over which no bridge, passed and repassed by zealous, reconciling men,—is stretched. The Anglican clergy, however personally worthy must be many of its members, are unfitted by the very nature of the institution to which they belong, to fulfil such an office. They are too busy marrying, and giving in marriage; or hoarding up, with provident care, as much of the revenues of the church as may suffice to establish their little ones handsomely in the world. Never again will England be happy, joyous Eng-

land, till the old light shall once more stream over the pleasant land ; till the matin-chime and vesper bell again shall summon the work-worn labourer across hill, and dale, and coppice, unfenced by acts of enclosure ; over streamlets and through flowers, unguarded and unprofaned by the presence of that last bequest of Protestantism—a rural police force.

Fellow-countrymen, there are awful issues, both to you and yours, dependent upon a right apprehension of the “religious question” just now agitated with so much vehemence. Examine the subject for yourselves, without passion or prejudice ; undeterred by the ribald knaves, who for their own purposes, would fain persuade you that the faith of many of the best and wisest men of the present day—of the best and wisest men that have adorned our glorious past history, is idolatry, superstition, and I know not what. They invent fictions which vanish before the first glance of honest inquiry. Pure in doctrine, as when, after centuries of persecution, she emerged from the catacombs, the Catholic Church, unchanged and unchangeable, challenges now as she challenged then, the respect and reverence of all mankind ; and, more especially, she claims the respect, reverence, and *love* of the toiling millions, to minister to whose necessities, to soothe whose sorrows, has been ever her chief aim, as it is unquestionably her highest, holiest vocation !

FINIS.

